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Religious Identity and Social Engagement

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Religious Identity and Social Engagement

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Dedication

This dissertation, and the achievement it represents, is dedicated to the three people who made it possible: my mother, Sherry Ingle Shepherd, who encouraged me to set my sights high; my father, Jerry Wayne Shepherd, who taught me to never stop searching for answers; and my wife, Beth Dawn Shepherd, whose tireless editing efforts were second only to her unending love, support, and understanding in the realization of this goal.

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Religious Identity and Social Engagement

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Well-developed bodies of research exist in the separate areas of religious identity and social engagement, but only a small selection of recent work is devoted to understanding their intersection. This dissertation adds to this selection by exploring the connections between religious identity and social engagement. More specifically, this work focuses on understanding the role that individual and collective interpretations of religious identity play in shaping the socio-psychological processes that influence whether, and in what capacity, individuals and groups devote themselves to social change. This work attempts to achieve four goals: 1) to explore the multilevel nature of religious identity within society; 2) to evaluate the effects of religious identity on social engagement; 3) to show the usefulness of quantitative methodologies to social movement research; and 4) to add to the body of research in the field of religion and social movements. I find that the relationship between religious identity and attitudes and behaviors related to social engagement is more complex than current approaches acknowledge.

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Chapter One: The State of Religious Identity and Social Movement Research

Well-developed bodies of research exist in the separate areas of religious identity and social engagement, but only a small selection of recent work is devoted to understanding their intersection. This dissertation adds to this selection by exploring the connections between religious identity and social engagement. More specifically, this work focuses on understanding the role that individual and collective interpretations of religious identity play in shaping the socio-psychological processes that influence whether, and in what capacity, individuals and groups devote themselves to social change.

In this introductory chapter I present a review of the literature that provides the necessary theoretical background for the following chapters. Additionally, this chapter illustrates the foundational theories that I assume underlie the relationships addressed throughout this work.

CONCEPTUALIZING IDENTITY

Although this dissertation focuses on religious identity, it will be useful to first establish a broader conceptual definition of identity that will make subsequent discussions more tangible. Exploring the meaning and origins of identity is a central task of research in sociology, psychology, and social-psychology. Many classical works written from diverse perspectives suggest that status, or a social actor's relative position in society based on the levels of respect and prestige they hold, is closely related to identity (e.g. Blau 1977; Blau, Beeker and Fitzpatrick 1984; Goffman 1959; Simmel 1955). For example, racial, ethnic, gender, and occupational identities are important determinants of status in many societies. Furthermore, many theorists have argued that

social status is connected with attitudes, behaviors, and tastes (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 2007; Fussell 1992; Niebuhr 1929; Weber 1946). Individuals are taught to appreciate different types of art or religion, or to behave differently based on their social status. In the social science and psychology literature countless works have found support for various relationships between racial, ethnic, and gender identities and myriad attitudes[1]. Taken together, these works show strong support for the assumption that identity, either directly or through its by-product "status", can influence one's beliefs and behaviors[2]. It is this assumption that forms the basis for the following analyses.

I posit that attitudes are one of the most basic building blocks – one of the atomic components – of social structure. Just as in the natural world, these atoms rarely exist in isolation. Rather, attitudes are often inextricably entangled with other basic components of society - identities, and social artifacts[3] – in widely understood stories that give them purpose and meaning. Much like the arrangement of atoms determines the physical properties of an object, relationships between the atomic components of society in these widely understood stories determine the shape of society.

Drawing on previous research (e.g. Ammerman 2003; Cerulo 1997; Smith 2003; Somers 1994), I refer to these "widely understood stories" as *cultural narratives*. This concept is discussed in more depth below; for now I present three important assumptions regarding their conceptualization in this work: 1) Cultural narratives are the most basic *compound* components of social structure. They are comprised of the "atomic" components of society discussed above and they are shaped by the connections between

[1] Throughout this work I use the terms "attitudes" and "beliefs" interchangeably.

[2] Although social status is an important connection between identity and attitudes and behaviors, it is not explored in depth in this work. The important aspect of this relationship is that in a more general sense, identities *have* statuses and that in certain situations identity is functionally interchangeable with status as a determinant of attitudes.

[3] Here I use the term "social artifacts" to refer to both tangible (e.g. books, cars, factories) and intangible (e.g. the educational system, America, Republicans) products of society.

them. 2) Cultural narratives can be broad or narrow in scope and can encompass or be encompassed by other narratives. 3) The location in which individuals find or place themselves within these narratives determines their identity. The connections between identities, attitudes, and social artifacts within that narrative influence the beliefs and behaviors of social actors involved.

Narratives are archetypal stories that hold a shared and often semi-sacred meaning to members of that society and prescribe attitudes and actions for social actors. The issue of how any individual or group's identity is determined is discussed more deeply in chapter 2 and subsequent sections on *emplottment*, but first, I address potential alternatives to using cultural narratives as the foundation of my conceptualization of identity.

Connecting identity, perception, and action

There is significant diversity in the theories and concepts that have been used to connect the chain of influence between individual perceptions, cognitions, actions, and social structure in previous research[4]. Rather than explore all of these approaches in depth, I will focus on a comparison of the three that I deem best-suited for the following analyses: *collective action frames*, *cultural schemas,* and *cultural narratives*.

At their core, each of these concepts addresses the connection between social structure and individual cognition. Researchers such as Snow, Benford, and those following in their tradition define *collective action frames* as organized packages of perception and meaning (Snow and Benford 1988; Snow and Benford 1992; Snow et al. 1986). Sewell (1992), building on Giddens' work regarding structure and structuralization, presents *cultural schemas* as those aspects of structure that "provide

[4] For example, Bourdieu's *habitus* (1977), Emerson's *worldviews* (1996), Goffman, Snow and Benford's *frames* (Goffman 1974, Snow et al 1986), Giddens' *structuration* (1984), Sewell's *cultural schemas* (1996, 1992), Smith's *cultural narratives* (2003), and Swidler's cultural "tool kit" (1986).

actors with meanings, motivations, and recipes for social action" (Sewell 1996 pg. 842). Despite certain similarities in purpose, collective action frames and schemas are not interchangeable. As Snow states, these are "kindred concepts", but they are not transposable (Snow and Benford 1992 pg. 136).

Although frame and schema theory comprise a large portion of the broader literature on the duality of social structure, a promising new means of conceptualizing social structure has emerged in recent years. The concept of the cultural narrative has seen its most recent and in-depth examination in Smith's evaluation of the basis for macro level belief structures (Smith 2003). Therein, Smith discusses the role of the narratives in establishing and transmitting concepts of social structure.

Although Smith's work is one of the most comprehensive sociological treatments of the narrative as carrier of social structure, he does not discuss the implications of this concept on identity. Consequently, I will turn to other theorists' work on narratives and identity in later sections. As I explore this relationship in more depth in Chapter 2, I will discuss work on cultural narratives that aids in understanding the relevance of cultural narratives to individual attitudes and beliefs.

In developing a concept of identity that allows for both social determinism and individual agency, while concurrently addressing the connection between identity and attitudes, the narrative-based approach wins out over the frame- and schema-based approaches for several reasons. First, Sewell's schema-based theory of duality is missing micro level components that allow for higher levels of individual agency. Smith's concept of the *meta-narrative*[5] is also deficient in this area, but other scholars of the narrative-based approach have developed the micro level aspects of the theory (Ammerman 2003; Somers 1994).

[5] Meta-narratives are broader, more general narratives that may include or overlap with other narratives (Smith 2003).

A second reason for selecting narrative theory over frame or schema theory is the difference in the way each approach views the process of internalizing social structure (i.e., a given schema, frame, or narrative). This act is an important feature of frame theory and occurs through *frame alignment,* wherein movement leaders work intently to shape the perspectives of current and potential participants. Although powerful individual actors can be important in movements, the dependency of frames on the frame-aligning capabilities of movement leaders is too utilitarian and deterministic for an approach that attempts to integrate freewill and individual agency into identity theory. By emphasizing the relevance of one key participant's involvement, frame alignment oversimplifies the role of the average individual in developing his or her own perspective. Furthermore, the lack of attention to innovation in collective action frames and the emphasis placed on frame alignment as a *requirement* for social movement involvement (Snow et al. 1986 pg. 464) make the concept too deterministic to explain the individual and small group agency discussed in this work.

In contrast, in schema theory this process is underdeveloped. Additionally, Sewell's definition of schemas does little to present a formal explanation of what a schema is and how it can be made analytically functional on a multilevel scale. In his description, one is presented with examples of schemas of kingship and handshakes with little guidance as to what makes such disparate concepts similar (Sewell 1992). In attempting to formulate a definition of a schema from these examples, the best definition that could be derived is that a schema is equivalent to a script or behavioral guide akin to those presented in Goffman's dramaturgical model (Goffman 1959). Cultural narratives, as I shall show, are less ambiguous in their conceptualization and more easily delineated for use in analyses.

In frames and schemas theory, there is an implicit consideration of the role of attitudes, values and beliefs in shaping individual perceptions and actions. However, despite this general understanding and acceptance of their influence, neither theory positions the roles of attitudes, values, and beliefs as important defining factors. In contrast, if an attitude is relevant to a social narrative it is, by definition, part of the social narrative and therefore part of social structure. If an attitude intersects with an identity within a narrative, that attitude becomes relevant to those who emplot themselves within that narrative.[6]

Entire careers have been spent developing and refining conceptualizations of identity. In this short work, adequate time cannot be devoted to developing an equally mature approach to identity based on this new formulation. Rather, this dissertation addresses only some of the most important components of such a conceptualization identity. Furthermore, the scope of this work is restricted to the context of religious identity and attitudes and behaviors related to social engagement. As the initial part of a broader research program that moves from the specific to the more general, this work establishes some of the basic principles of this new means of defining identity. I temporarily avoid certain important questions such as what factors determine which narratives and attitudes are most salient for given individuals or groups, and leave them to be addressed in future research.

CURRENT STATE OF THE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY LITERATURE

For the most part, the previous research on religious identity has paralleled the broader body of identity research (see Cerulo 1997; Cote and Schwartz 2002; Davidman 2003; and especially Peek 2005). This has provided a readily available set of theories

[6] For the purposes of this work, attitudes will be defined as in Schuman (1995 pg. 68) to be "a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of an object" wherein "the object can be anything at all – a person, group, institution, belief, or concept such as an attitude itself" (Ibid.).

and concepts, but it is not without its drawbacks. For one, analyses of identity often emphasize the relevance of the micro level (i.e., the individual). Although such analyses sometimes acknowledge the role of external forces in shaping individual identity, these forces are rarely central to the analytical story. An important consequence of the parallelism between research on religious identity and the broader identity literature is that this concern with the micro level has carried over into studies of religious identity. This has resulted in a relative dearth of research addressing questions related to the structural aspects of religious identity; for example, what role individuals play in shaping religious identity at the macro level, how individuals come to share similar religiously-based attitudes and beliefs, what social processes influence the relationship between religious identities and attitudes, and how religious identities emerge and evolve in society at multiple levels of analysis.

Religious identity as narrative

Cultural narratives emphasize the connection between social structure and individuals' subjective realities and advance our understanding of how individuals shape and are shaped by their cultures. Two proponents of this approach in the religious arena have been Christian Smith and Nancy Ammerman. Smith (2003) focuses his attention on macro level narratives, or what he refers to as *meta-narratives*. He argues that these and other, more context specific narratives provide the basic structure for interpreting reality. They provide cultures with storylines that define relationships between actors, allow individuals to interpret events, and suggest appropriate responses. Religious identities are relevant in a society to the extent that they are present in prevailing cultural narratives. Ammerman (2003) accentuates the role of individual agency in shaping and interpreting these narratives through concentrating primarily on the micro level and through building on Somers' (1994) work on identity. In Ammerman's view, individual

autobiographical narratives intersect with broader cultural narratives though the process of *emplottment* – wherein an individual places his or her autobiographical narrative into a broader cultural narrative and begins to interpret his or her life through this perspective[7].

Both approaches present a picture of cultural narratives as similar in function to mythical, idealistic stories used to pass down oral histories. As those stories did, cultural narratives transmit social structure and history through a culturally contextualized perspective. Indeed, Smith suggests that office water coolers and religious pulpits are the new "fires" around which we huddle to have these stories interpreted and conveyed to us (Smith 2003). Although the settings for the transmission of these stories have changed, their purpose has not. They still provide social actors with a shared means of interpreting reality.

Attitudes are important components of cultural narratives. Consider Smith's example of the American Experiment narrative:

> "Once upon a time, our ancestors lived in an Old World where they were persecuted for religious beliefs and oppressed by established aristocracies. Land was scarce, freedoms denied, and futures bleak. But then brave and visionary men like Columbus opened up a New World, and our freedom-loving forefathers crossed the ocean to carve out of a wilderness a new civilization. Through bravery, ingenuity, determination, and goodwill, our forebears forged a way of life where men govern themselves, believers worship in freedom, and where anyone can grow rich and become president. This America is genuinely new, a clean break from the past, a historic experiment in freedom and democracy standing as a city on a hill shining a beacon of hope to guide a dark world into a future of prosperity and liberty. It deserves our honor, our devotion, and possibly the commitment of our very lives for its defense." (Smith 2003 pg. 68)

This narrative clearly prescribes certain attitudes toward, and relationships between, objects of relevance within the narrative: the Old World is a backward place that is the antithesis of American ideals; the founding fathers were brave, exceptional

[7] The process of emplottment may occur at the group level as well. Snow et al.'s (1986) concept of frame alignment provides a ready description of how this might occur through the efforts of group leaders, but this discussion is beyond the scope of this work.

men worthy of our respect; Americans should have positive, almost reverent attitudes toward America; Americans should be patriotic and willing to sacrifice for the benefit of the country; and Americans should recognize that the good of the country is more important than one individual's life. Those who associate themselves with the identity "American" and emplot themselves in the American Experiment narrative will likely be supportive of America and its leaders, feel a sense of duty to defend it, and possibly feel a sense of resentment to the Old World.

In this light, beliefs become shapeable via changes in the narratives of which they are a part. As cultures change, so do the prevailing cultural narratives. For the most part, cultural narratives are conservative forces; however, when taken out of their "normal" scenarios and applied in novel ways to new contexts, innovation occurs (Ammerman 2003).

That religious teachings are often transmitted through parables makes the narrative approach especially relevant to religious identities. A central argument of this work is that the narrative approach allows researchers to consider differences in denomination as differences in religious narratives rather than merely differences in institutional association. This has important theoretical consequences that are explored throughout this work.; however, it is methodologically enlightening as well. Keeping an ear to the socio-historical backgrounds of denominations and to the processes connecting broader religious worldviews to individual interpretations of those worldviews allows us to be more confident in the validity of the denominational classifications used in religious analyses.

Fluidity in religious identities

One of the great accomplishments of the qualitative treatments of religious identity has been to show that religious identity is fluid and mutable, both on an

individual and on a cultural level (Ammerman 2003; Dillon 1999; Hammond 1988; Neitz 1987; Peek 2005; Warner 1989). As an example, Peek's (2005) study of a group of college students' Muslim identities prior to and after the September 11th attacks illustrates the susceptibility of individual religious identity to socio-historical forces.

Informants in the study described passing through what Peek identifies as three distinct types of religious identification during their religious development. In the first stage, the respondents noted that their religious identities were closely attached to ascribed factors such as ethnicity and family of origin. In this stage, the students' religious identities did not often go beyond nominal identification with the religious group, and did not commonly involve reflection on the beliefs or ideology of that group. She notes,

> "Many of the students pointed out that just because they were born into a certain religion did not mean that they comprehended or appreciated the belief system and practices…" (Peek 2005 pg. 224).

In contrast, the second stage was marked by the students' choice to identify with their religious identity. During this stage, religious identity became one of the primary identities presented in day-to-day interaction. After a period of introspection and a conscious effort to more deeply explore Islam the students deemphasized other aspects of their lives, "As interviewees learned more about Islam and drew closer to the religion, they became more likely to reject or downplay other aspects of their identity" (Ibid. pg. 230).

In the third and final stage, students made a point to publicly display their chosen religious identities in response to the anti-Muslim sentiments that followed the September 11th attacks. Although Islam was already an important part of the respondents' lives, it became more salient than ever. As one respondent stated, "…now that Islam is on the

forefront of everything, it seems there's the need to use that as my defining characteristic, a greater need to do that, now more than ever" (Ibid. pg. 231).

The fluidity of religious identity in Peek's work complements previous findings which illustrate that identification with a religious identity can derive from both internal and external forces and can be associated with a variety of goals. Hammond (1988) argues that religious identity moves from involuntarily held to selectively chosen as religious institutions lose their function as a primary group in modern society. Whereas churches in the 19th century were "one of the ways people knew who they were" (Hammond 1988 pg. 2) increasingly segmented and disconnected social spheres have reduced the importance of the church as a primary group. Ammerman (2003) restates this sentiment in terms of ascribed versus achieved religious identity, arguing that religious identity can take ascribed and/or achieved forms, depending on the social context.

Although Hammond's work speaks to religious identity at the macro level and focuses on broad cultural changes, Peek's analyses show that individuals can experience fluidity in their religious identity in similar ways. As the first quote above illustrates, many of the students in her study responded that they initially were just "going through the motions" to placate parents or the normative expectations of others. During this stage, the students felt little agency in defining their religious identity. This is in contrast to latter stages wherein students willingly devoted more time to developing their knowledge of their religion and made conscious efforts to present their religious identities as primary ones (Peek 2005).

The conclusion that religious identity can be independent of religious conviction is implicit in these studies. Individuals can present a strong religious identity but be internally unreflective regarding those beliefs and unmotivated or undirected by their

religious identity. This approach is exemplified by Batson et al.'s (1993) classification of religious pursuits as *means*-, *ends*-, or *quest*-based, corresponding to the psychological nature and salience of an individual's religious identity[8].

Batson et al. classify religion as *means*-based when cognitive salience of religious belief is low an religion is used as the path to a non-religious end, such as economic reward. In contrast, *ends*- and *quest*-based religious beliefs are marked by high cognitive salience of religious beliefs and the practice of religion for religious means. Where *ends*- and *quest*-based religious beliefs differ is in their practitioner's level of acceptance of these beliefs and his or her acceptance of religious dogma. Specifically, individuals who hold primarily *quest*-based religious beliefs are more likely to reflect upon their religious beliefs in a questioning way and less likely to toe a dogmatic line. Although questing individuals remain open to different interpretations of their beliefs, their beliefs still have a strong cognitive impact on them. In contrast, *ends*-based religious beliefs are marked by less complexity in attitudes and higher acceptance of dogma, but higher salience than *means*-based approaches.

The acknowledgement that religious identity can be independent of faith is far from new (e.g. Weber 1946). However, whether speaking in terms of Peek, Ammerman, and Hammond's ascribed versus achieved (or chosen) religious identity, or Batson et al.'s multidimensional approach to religious belief, these works illustrate that religious identity can derive from both internal and external forces. In language more similar to that used in the beginning of this section, these works show that social structure can both influence religious identity and be shaped by individual interpretations of religious

[8] Batson and colleagues stress that the means-, ends-, and quest-based nature of religion comprise a three dimensional understanding of religious belief and that these are not mutually exclusive aspects of religion. In their conceptual and methodological approach it is possible for an individual to score high on multiple dimensions of this concept. However, for ease of discussion I refer to the dimensions in terms of ideal types, wherein if one dimension is high, the others are low.

identity, thus underscoring the need for a conceptualization of identity that allows for such reflexivity.

Methodological considerations

These earlier works illustrate three important facts. First, that religious identity is contextual – because it is part of broader cultural narratives, it is shaped by geographic, social, and historical factors. Second, that religious identity is malleable – it can change as a result of internal and external forces. And finally, that religious identity is independent of what some might call "true faith" – in certain situations, attitudes that are in line with religious beliefs can be held or religious practices can be participated in for reasons other than inherent religious faith.

Despite the insightful qualitative work that has been done on religious identity formation, virtually no quantitative work exists that addresses this issue. This is likely due, at least in some part, to the fact that common conceptual approaches to denominations used in quantitative work do not allow for a nuanced assessment of the socio-psychological processes involved in identity formation. However, by using denominational affiliation as a proxy for religious narratives we can build on the previous qualitative work using quantitative methods.

In nomothetic, quantitative studies, religious identity commonly resembles classical conceptions of collective identity. These studies present identity as shared worldviews and lived experience resulting from acculturation and socialization via one's primary group membership (Cerulo 1997; Hammond 1988). In these studies, religious identity is often considered synonymous with (and operationalized by) denominational affiliation. Although this method is worthwhile when used appropriately (as will be discussed later), previous operationalizations of religious identity via denominational affiliation often ignore the socio-historical context that new systems, such as the

RELTRAD classification scheme (Steensland et al. 2000), integrate. These earlier approaches emphasize religious identity as a tool for categorization, but deemphasize the socially constructed nature of religious identity.

In addition to being an overly restrictive and inflexible means of operationalizing religious identity, there are questions regarding the appropriateness of this method in modern American culture. Specifically, this approach has been criticized by those who argue that denominational affiliation is waning in significance (e.g. Pearce and Axinn 1998; Smith 1998; Wuthnow 1988). Although studies show that important denominational differences remain (see Sherkat 2003; Sullins 1999 for examples), critics are right to point out that mere differences in name should not be the primary defining characteristic of denominational differences and are right to argue for a classification of religious identity that integrates a deeper understanding of socio-historical context.

The strictly taxonomic use of religious identity outlined above is one of the most common methodological approaches in sociological religious research, but an improved alternative does exist. An emerging approach hearkens back to denominational affiliation as a taxonomic means of categorizing religious identities, but it emphasizes the socio-historical and social-psychological reasons underpinning those classifications. Current trends in this field are exemplified by Steensland et al.'s (2000) RELTRAD classification scheme and Emerson's (1996) work on religious worldviews. These approaches have their roots in early works that highlighted elective affinities between denominations and sectors of society that were separated by non-religious differences, such as those in class or race (e.g. Herberg 1960; Niebuhr 1929; Weber 1946). Although this operationalization of religious identity may seem similar to the first method discussed above, it is distinguished by a stronger emphasis on religious culture, social structure, and the role of socio-psychological forces in the development of religious identity.

This final approach, utilizing the RELTRAD classification scheme, is the one that is used throughout this work. Although no analytical approach is correct for all situations, this method is well-suited for use at both the micro and macro level because it emphasizes the cultural and social foundations of separate religious identities. Specifically, the RELTRAD classification produces six religious tradition categories plus an unaffiliated category: mainline Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Other (including non-western religions).

Intra-denominational differences are rarely emphasized in the Catholic, Jewish, and Other categories in quantitative, sociological assessment of religion. As chapter 3 shows, especially in the case of Catholics wherein sample size is less of a restraining factor, this is likely a naïve approach. For better or worse, RELTRAD continues with the straightforward singular classification of the Catholic and Jewish groups, and the catch-all "Other" grouping. However, RELTRAD does include three important advances over previous classification schemes: the creation of the black Protestant grouping; the refinement of the no-denomination/non-denominational distinction; and the use of a Evangelical rather than conservative Protestant category. In the first case, RELTRAD's acknowledgement of the continuing importance of the church for African Americans is a key component of the benefits it holds via the integration of social and historical context. Steensland et al. note that "African Americans emphasize different aspects and nuances of Christian doctrine, especially the importance of freedom and the quest for justice" (Steensland et al. 2000 pg. 294), resulting in liberal attitudes to economic issues and more conservative attitudes on social and family issues[9].

[9] Quantitatively measuring identity and narrative is not a trivial task. Although the RELTRAD classification scheme addresses some major historical components of religious traditions it is not as closely related to religious narrative as the descriptive narratives presented in Chapter 3. The use of the RELTRAD scheme as an operationalization of religious identity (and narrative) is an imperfect solution to a chronic problem in merging theory with inferential statistics.

In separating the non-denominational Protestants from the no-denominational Protestants, Steensland et al. emphasize the fluid nature of religious identity. As they note, significant changes in the demographics of American religion require a clarification and update of what it means to be "non-denominational." Specifically, some individuals identify themselves as "Protestant" but do not identify with a particular denomination, do not frequently attend church, and exhibit low levels of religious salience. Other individuals who also respond as Protestant do not identify with a particular denomination because they attend independent mega-churches. In contrast to the low religious salience exhibited by the former type of individual, these latter individuals are similar to Evangelical Protestants in many beliefs. Although qualitatively different, in previous classification schemes these groups are often lumped together. In the RELTRAD scheme this latter group is included in the Evangelical Protestant classification.

Finally, many previous operationalizatons of religious classification include a conservative Protestant, rather than Evangelical Protestant grouping. As Steenland et al. note, this overemphasizes the fundamentalist vs. liberal perception of religion and produces a classification system that is based on attitudes rather than religious tradition.

Although the RELTRAD classification scheme doesn't specifically address the role of religious narratives in religious identity, narrative-like aspects of religious histories are the foundations of its groupings. As such, the resulting groupings coincide with the concept of religious narratives better than less historically and culturally sensitive classifications.

An additional benefit of the RELTRAD classification scheme is that it is constructed from religious affiliation measures that are available in many datasets. Therefore, some degree of standardization can be achieved when comparing findings

from multiple analyses. As this work will show, this is achievable even when analyzing data with different levels of analysis.

CURRENT STATE OF THE RELIGION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT LITERATURE

I couch my analyses of religious identity in terms of attitudes and behaviors that are relevant to social movement participation for three reasons. First, any approach which argues that religious identities carry with them attitudinal and behavioral expectations - as this one does - should be able to illustrate the connections between these concepts. Attitudes, behaviors, and identities are the foundations of social movements and as such, movements can be fertile ground for exploring and illustrating these connections. Second, in contrast to studies of religious identity, social movement research commonly focuses on social structure. Previous social movement research provides theories and concepts that are helpful for understanding the connections between macro and micro level identities. Finally, the study of religion and social movements is an emerging field in itself and the conclusions arrived at in this work will add to the current body of literature in that area.

Similar to the parallels between religious identity research and the broader literature on identity, studies in the sub-field of religion and social movements have mostly kept in step with the broader social movement literature. As before, there are pros and cons to this parallelism. Although the social movement literature has provided a strong theoretical foundation for research on religion and social movements, it too has also passed along its methodological biases, resulting in the religion and social movement literature being dominated by historical case studies. If sociology as a discipline is plagued by variable-centered, quantification-based reductionism, as some have argued, the field of religion and social movements has the opposite affliction; historical case studies focused on structural analyses rule the day (e.g. Gorski 2003; Nepstad 2004;

Wood 1999). A relatively recent interest in the study of identity-based movements (e.g. Melucci 1988; Melucci 1994; Touraine 1981; Warner 1989) and a post 9/11 interest in Muslim identity (e.g. Fair and Shepherd 2006; Hermansen 2003; Peek 2005) has helped turn researchers' attentions to the individual, but the current theories relevant to the study of religion and social movements are still mostly devoid of analytical concepts that are useful at micro levels of analysis.

For the purposes of this work, this overemphasis on structural factors in the social movement literature dovetails nicely with the previously discussed overemphasis on the individual in studies of religious identity.

Developing a more mature field

Although research exploring the intersection between religion and social change – and consequently social movements – has been around since at least the beginning of the 20th century[10], the field of "religion and social change" has yet to become a pillar of sociology. In his introduction to *Disruptive Religion*, Christian Smith wrote:

> "This volume was begotten as a response to a glaring incongruity that is evident to those who study both social movements and religion…on the one hand, it is clear that religion has often played, and today still plays, an absolutely central role in a number of important social and political movements…on the other hand, religion's important contribution to social movements remains conspicuously under-explored – arguably virtually ignored – in the academic literature on social movements." (Smith 1996 pg.1-2)

Yet a decade later, with only a few exceptions, the status of the field remains relatively unchanged. Although excellent works have been produced since that time, the blaze of work that *Disruptive Religion* sought to produce never grew beyond an initial spark. Important areas of research within the field of religion and social movements remain relatively untouched and "virtually ignored."

[10] Here I am referring to seminal works in the area such as Weber (1958).

In its current state this area is absent of certain features that are essential to a mature field of study. Namely, what is needed for the field of religion and social movements to take its place beside established areas of study such as race and ethnicity, gender studies, or criminology is:

1. the development or increased usage of theoretical concepts specifically tailored to the field of religion and social movements;
2. increased focus on individual-level factors which affect the way that social movements and religious beliefs interact; and
3. methodological innovation and an increase in quantitative analyses that may have greater generalizability than singular case studies.

At this point, the field of religion and social movements remains, at best, a hybrid of two larger fields. To come into its own, the field must develop concepts and theories tailored to its needs, rather than continuing to borrow from other fields. In short, there is a need for theoretical and methodological refinement in the area or religion and social movements that this work seeks to address.

Barriers to maturation

Smith suggested that several issues were preventing the field of religion and social movements from achieving maturity:

1. the prevalence of secularization theory in the social sciences;
2. the preeminence of structural-functionalism in formative years of the contributing areas;
3. the fragmentation of academic research;
4. the perceived irrationality of religion; and

5. questionable religious relevance in the social movements that formed the basis for many classical social movement studies.

Some of these issues still hinder the field's development and ironically, Smith's work itself may have prevented exploration in recent years. Some may have seen Smith's work as theoretically comprehensive and not realized the potential it had for conceptual development. Although his work does much to categorize the types of effects which religion may have on social movements, it is short on conceptual and theoretical development. There is much more to be said about the specific processes that underlie the relationships between religion and social movements.

Finally, there are inherent methodological difficulties that may prevent outside researchers from investing time and research in the area. The areas of religion and social movements are both full of concepts that are hard to operationalize and define. For example, just consider the basic questions, "What is religion?" and "What is a social movement?" The fact that a consistently accepted answer to each of these questions does not exist produces problems with conceptual and analytical consistency that are difficult to overcome.

The problem of attitudes

This difficulty in theory and conceptionalization reaches its peak when attitudes enter into analyses. Common sense suggests that an important part of what is relevant about both religious belief and social movements is attitudinal factors[11]. However, consideration of these factors becomes increasingly more difficult when trying to

[11] The role of attitudes in predicting behaviors in the cases of social movement participation has seen a considerable amount of study, yet the debate wages on as to their relevance. This paper will focus on the recent work such as that cited in Schuman (1995), which argues that attitudes do indeed predict behaviors when operationalized correctly and when normative influences are considered.

analytically parcel out religious attitudes from other beliefs. For researchers who think in causal terms and feel most comfortable with conclusions and methods that imply causal relationships, the problems that must be overcome to produce such works in the area of religion and social movements may appear too difficult to be worthwhile.

Others attribute the dearth of attitudinal factors in the current social movement literature in part to the strong focus on structure that has pervaded the social movement literature of recent decades. I argue that it is also likely due to the complexity of models and concepts involved. As discussed above, operationalization is a sticky issue. Given these hurdles to conducting methodologically rigorous research that would be well-received by the academic community, it is not surprising that the body of work on attitudinal motivators for social movement involvement is sparse.

This work addresses some of the shortcomings in the religious identity and religion and social movement literature discussed above. By refining the standard approach to religious identity and addressing the current shortcomings of the social movement literature, many of the problematic issues plaguing the field of religion and social movements can be resolved.

METHODS AND DATA

Several data sources and methodological approaches are used throughout this work. Chapter 2 uses nationally representative individual level survey data from the Social Capital and Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS: Saguaro Seminar at the John F. Kennedy School of Government 2000) in combination with logistic regression analyses. Chapter 3 employs regional (Texas) data from the 2004 Survey of Texas Adults (SoTA: Musick 2004) and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses. Chapter 3 also includes descriptive analyses using data from the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS: Davis, Smith and Marsden 2007) that support the validity of the regional

SoTA data. In Chapter 4, data from a nationally representative survey of congregations (NCS: Chaves 1998) provides group level information for descriptive analyses of American congregational activity. Appendix A contains additional information on the data used in the analyses.

These data sets were chosen for their appropriateness in addressing the questions presented in the following chapters. On the whole, this data allows a good evaluation of the hypotheses that derive from the theory above and in each section. However, there is one important shortcoming that cannot be rectified in this, or any other, data that is statistically representative of the American population; specifically the overemphasis on Protestantism and Catholicism in the statistical models. Although the discussions of religious identity speak in general terms and are theorized to apply to religious identities from many traditions, the analyses in the following chapters are centered on Protestants and Catholics in America. The reason is entirely pragmatic; comprising around 80% of the population (Sherkat and Ellison 1999), Protestants and Catholics are generally the only groups that appear in large enough numbers to allow for statistical analyses. For this reason, in a strict sense, the quantitative analyses in this work are not generalizable beyond the subjects under direct study. In most cases this group is modern day Catholics and Protestants in America. In a technical sense the quantitative analyses limit the scope of this work. However, by providing empirical evidence for the theoretical background presented above they add to the generalizability of the relevant theoretical components. Furthermore there is a Christian bias to the concept of religion presented in this work. The emphasis on attitudes rather than ritual is more suited for the American Protestantism and Catholicism and less adequately suited for non-Western or strongly ritualistic religions.

Although the majority of analyses presented here focus on the individual as the unit of analysis, the conceptual definition of identity can be abstracted to aggregate levels. Collective identity, then, is the identity of a group within a given social context and the prevailing belief system of a group.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The following chapters are laid out to address increasing levels of scope. Chapter 2 evaluates the effects of religious identification on an individual's attitudes regarding community agency. Previous research suggests that religious beliefs have an influence on attitudes towards, and levels of, social engagement (e.g. Nepstad 2004; Smith 1996b; Thompson 1966; Walzer 1966), but much of this previous work has been qualitative in design and lacking in generalizability. Additionally, the relationship between attitudes toward social engagement and actual social action has not been firmly established. Chapter 2 addresses each of these issues; first, through quantitative analyses that show a clear connection between religious identity and attitudes toward community agency and second, by presenting recent research that has clarified the connection between attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

In chapter 3 I explore the fluidity of religious identity and what Giddens has referred to as the "duality of structure" (Giddens 1984) - the interplay between social determinism and individual agency. In this chapter I explore the ways in which different religious identities are entwined with different cultural narratives and how these connections influence the attitudes held by the incumbents of these religious identities at all levels of religious salience.

This work argues that religious identity exists at an transcends multiple levels of abstraction in society. As such, I should provide evidence for this claim. Chapter 4 provides quantitative support at the group level for the theories presented and evaluated

at the individual level in the previous chapters. Specifically, congregational level data is used to show that the relationships between religious identity and activism suggested in chapters 2 and 3 also exist in aggregate social structures.

Finally, chapter 5 summarizes the goals and conclusions of the previous chapters and considers their relevance to broader issues in the study of identity, religion, and social movements. Chapter 5 also presents possible weaknesses of the analyses included in this work and suggested avenues for future research.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This introductory chapter has presented the basic theoretical foundation for the following chapters. Although the primary goal of this research is to argue for a conceptualization of religious identity that better incorporates the multi-level, fluid nature of identity, this work has other implications. In large part, it addresses the ongoing debate regarding structural determinism and individual agency. Many social theorists have argued that the primary components of social structure are the mostly immutable roles available to individuals in a society and the scripted relationships between those roles. I argue, as others have, that such an inflexible interpretation of social structure is overly deterministic. By illustrating how identities are connected to ambiguous and mutable cultural narratives, I show that individuals and groups can exert their influence on social structure. Additionally, this dissertation has the goal of stimulating research on the topic of religion and social movements, adding to the repertoire of successfully demonstrated methods for analyzing the relationships between religion and social movements, and increasing the number of conceptual tools available to those wishing to do future research in that area.

Chapter Two: Religious Identity, Social Movements, and Attitudes

I begin the analytical section of this work by evaluating the relationship between religious identity and attitudes at the individual level. This chapter focuses on the narratives of empowerment and engagement that denominations transmit (or do not transmit) to their members. Specifically, it addresses the methods through which religious identification influences attitudes concerning community agency.

Understanding the role that religious identity plays in the socio-psychological processes of attitude formation is central to understanding the ways in which religion affects social movement support and participation. The importance of this issue has not been overlooked by previous theorists, but the relationship between religion and these processes is rarely addressed with any specificity. For example, in *Disruptive Religion*, Smith (1996a) speaks in broad terms about the role of religion in providing moral imperatives without discussing the underlying social-psychological processes in any formalized way. In separate works, he and other authors acknowledge the role of socio-psychological factors in social movements by integrating concepts such as "cognitive liberation" (McAdam 1982), "insurgent consciousness" (Smith 1991), and "injustice frames" (Gamson 1992; Gamson, Fireman and Rytina 1982) into their theoretical models, but they do not address the processes of attitude formation in relation to specific attitudes that might form the foundations for social action.

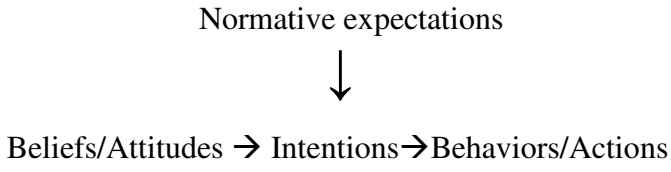
THE PROBLEM OF ATTITUDES REVISITED

As discussed in chapter 1, this lack of research specifically addressing attitudes may result, in part, from the controversy over their relevance. Many researchers see attitudes as unpredictable and unrelated to behavior and some works exist to support this claim (Schuman 1995). However, extensive research by some of the world's preeminent

social psychologists contradicts this assumption and supports the conclusion that there is a connection between attitudes and behaviors when the relevant concepts are properly operationalized (Ajzen 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein 1977; Ajzen and Madden 1986; Fishbein and Ajzen 1974; Schuman 1995; Schuman and Johnson 1976; Weigel and Newman 1976).

This is not to say that the evidence from the previous literature incontrovertibly supports a correlation between attitudes and behaviors. One especially problematic area concerns the difficulty in predicting the effects of normative expectations. In light of research illustrating that external influences can sever or modify the connection between attitudes and behaviors, theoretical models that previously did not consider the effects of normative expectations have been updated to do so. One of the most widely accepted theoretical models that connects attitudes and behaviors and also considers normative expectations is Ajzen's *theory of reasoned action* (Ajzen 1991). Figure 4 below outlines the basic model of the theory of reasoned action and includes minor modifications based on Schuman's (1995) discussion of recent advances in the area.

Figure 2.1 Theory of reasoned action (adapted from Schuman 1995)



As figure 2.1 shows, the theory of reasoned action predicts a causal relationship wherein beliefs and attitudes influence intentions to act. These intentions, in turn, influence future behavior. The link between attitudes and behaviors is most fragile at the

intersection of the individual's intentions and the social influence felt via the normative pressures (Schuman 1995). However, the more congruent normative expectations and individual attitudes are, the less likely it is that there will be a breakdown in the connection between attitudes and behaviors (Ibid.). As such, this link may be especially strong in religious and social movement organizations wherein deeply felt convictions are often buttressed by supportive normative expectations in an organizational context.

RELIGION AND COMMUNITY AGENCY

Religious beliefs and practices are related to increased individual civic engagement through their effects on behaviors such as voting, contentious political action, and volunteering (Park and Smith 2000; Smidt 1999; Smith 1996a; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Wilson and Janoski 1995). Several theories have been presented to explain these relationships, with many focusing on the increased availability of resources provided to individuals by their religious affiliation. Recent trends in the literature focus on capital-based arguments and emphasize the skills and network resources individuals gain via religious involvement, which in turn promote civic participation (Nepstad 2004; Park and Smith 2000; Peterson 1992; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Wilson and Musick 1997; Wilson and Musick 1998).

However, previous findings also suggest that religious involvement may have *attitudinal* effects which are connected to increased engagement. Changes in a religious group's attitude towards mainstream society can cause fluctuations in the group's willingness to civically engage (Regnerus and Smith 1998), and beliefs of divine support for one's actions may strengthen one's motivation for engagement (Smith 1996a). Additionally, religious teachings sometimes provide individuals with feelings of hope and empowerment which foster the belief that "now" is the time to act (Nepstad 2004; Smith 1996c). These findings, in conjunction with a long tradition of research supporting

a connection between attitudes and behaviors (e.g. Ajzen 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein 1977; Ajzen and Madden 1986; e.g. Bagozzi 1981; Bentler and Speckart 1981; Schuman and Johnson 1976), illustrate the importance of researching religious foundations for attitudes.

Despite the extensive work that has been done on religion and engagement, and the demonstrated relevance of attitudes in predicting behavior, important intersections between the two areas remain relatively unexplored. One such uncharted but critical area is the relationship between religious identity and perceptions of community agency. I use the term "community agency" to refer to the amount of influence that individuals feel they and other community members can exert on their community. The absence of research on this topic is especially prevalent in terms of quantitative analyses. Wood's work on religious culture and movement success comes closest to addressing this topic, but it focuses on case studies rather than a nationally generalizable sample, and on predictors of success rather than the connections between religious identity and attitudes that may predict involvement (Wood 1999). Work on the still nascent concept of community efficacy also informs this area, but the few studies that exist do not extensively consider the role of religious factors, if at all (e.g. Morenoff, Sampson and Raudenbush 2001; Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls 1997).

This article addresses this gap in the literature by evaluating what characteristics of religious identity empower members to believe they can make a positive change where they live. Although Wuthnow (1988) argues that the significance of religious denominations is waning in some ways for Catholics and Protestants, studies continue to show considerable variation across denominations in both attitudinal and behavioral areas (for examples see Sherkat and Ellison 1999).

I suggest that there are at least three pathways through which religious identity influences perceptions of community agency, depending on the specific denominational characteristics present. They are 1) through fostering engagement that builds feelings of individual agency, 2) by increasing social bonds with, and trust of, others in an individual's community, and 3) through the promotion of worldviews that inject individuals with empowered and efficacious beliefs.

These pathways are not expected to be accessible to all religious identities. The myriad characteristics that make each identity distinct influence each of these individual pathways differently, with an end result of making the pathway more open or closed to various individuals and groups.

The hypotheses evaluated in this section are based primarily on three areas of the previous literature: religion and engagement, bridging and bonding capital, and the ability of religious doctrines to empower individuals. Prior to exploring each of these sections of the literature it is necessary to give some clarity to the term 'agency', as it has been used in various ways throughout previous studies.

Agency

Agency is defined as an individual's (or group's) ability to affect themselves and the world around them. A "sense of agency" – or a feeling that an actor can be successful in achieving their intended goals – is often considered a precursor to one's actual agency (Ajzen 1991; Bandura 1977; Bandura 1986; Bandura 1996; Conner and Armitage 1998; Gecas 1989). Numerous other terms have been used to refer to this broad concept, thereby causing some ambiguity in its definition, but a study of the previous research identifies two primary dimensions that interact to produce an individual's sense of agency. They are: 1) an individual's perceptions of his/her control over his/her own body and 2) the expected external barriers or facilitators of the action under consideration

(Ajzen 1991; Bandura 1996; Conner and Armitage 1998; Gecas 1989; Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Rotter 1966; Schuman and Johnson 1976).

Perceptions of community agency are presumed to exhibit this same multi-dimensionality. In assessing their potential agency within the community, an individual is expected to consider two primary factors - first, their own ability to participate in action, and second, the amount of assistance or resistance they expect to receive from other individuals within their community. Because attitudes regarding one's agency can be strong predictors of behavioral outcomes, it is important to understand the influences that religion has on these attitudes.

Personal agency via previous engagement

Previous research has shown that feelings of individual agency are increased by previous behavioral successes. In other words, having successfully completed a task increases an individual's feelings of being able to complete that task again in the future (Bandura 1977; Bandura 1986; Bandura 1996). This suggests that when individuals successfully organize in support of an issue it will increase their feelings of agency in regards to future organization. This can occur regardless of whether the group's stated goals were achieved in the eyes of an outsider. Rather, the mere act of participation may be considered a success. Prior to having participated in social action, an individual may question whether he or she has the confidence to participate in a picket line, worthwhile services to offer to the local homeless shelter, or the motivation to go door-to-door collecting petition signatures. After participation, the individual may feel empowered in his or her ability to participate in future action.

For incumbents of certain religious identities this previous engagement is a key element in increasing perceptions of agency. Religious organizations foster involvement in both contentious and non-contentious action by presenting individuals with

opportunities for engagement and by facilitating participation (Pagnucco 1996; Park and Smith 2000; Smith 1996b; Wilson and Janoski 1995; Wilson and Musick 1998). Not all religious affiliations exhibit the same levels of social engagement or histories of activism (Regnerus and Smith 1998; Smith 1998; Steensland et al. 2000), but in denominations where engagement is promoted, membership is likely to be related to stronger feelings of agency through higher rates of previous engagement. These higher levels of perceived individual agency will likely contribute to stronger feelings of community agency.

Community agency via bridging social capital

The term "social capital" has a varied history, but current popular conceptualizations are exemplified by Putnam's (2000) definition of social capital as "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (pg. 19). Social capital can be broken down into two components – bonding capital and bridging capital (Ibid.). The first of these, bonding capital, is a result of *intra-group* connections between individuals. Bonding capital is likely to be developed and shared among individuals who attend the same church, participate in the same group activities, or work in the same departments. Bridging capital, on the other hand, is the result of *inter-group* interactions and is developed when members of a group interact positively with individuals outside of that group (Putnam 2000; Welch et al. 2004). As the name suggests, these connections bridge the social distance between otherwise unconnected groups and result in trust, mutual respect, and other positive feelings between group members and those outside of it (Cook 2003; Putnam 2000; Welch et al. 2004). High levels of bridging capital commonly indicate a socially engaged group. In contrast, high levels of bonding capital may indicate preferences for *intra*-group rather than *inter*-group relationships, and correlate with fewer positive connections to others outside of the home group. This in turn is

likely to result in lower levels of inter-group trust and respect (i.e. bridging capital) with others in the community (Smith 1998; Snow 1982).

The civic engagement fostered by some religious organizations through outreach or evangelism can promote inter-group interaction and the development of bridging social capital. When localized, such interaction can foster the reciprocal trust that fellow community members would be supportive in endeavors to improve the community (Cook 2003; Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls 1997). Religious groups that consistently interact positively with group outsiders in their community through either external engagement or hospitality are likely to develop inter-group ties and higher levels of bridging social capital than groups who do not. I suggest that an important result of this increase in inter-group capital is a corresponding decrease in the perceived external barriers to community improvement.

Empowering doctrines

Religious culture and beliefs can influence both an individual's perceptions of their own ability and their assessment of external barriers in a way that is conducive to higher feelings of agency. Previous research shows that if individuals hear from the pulpit that they have divine support for their actions or that God is working through them, increased feelings of personal agency will likely follow (Barnes 2005; Hughes and Demo 1989). Other works find that religious variables such as attendance, conservative Protestant affiliation, and strength of religious beliefs are related to higher feelings of self-esteem, self-assessment and other feelings of self-worth, and overall psychological well-being (Ellison and Burdette 2003; Ozorak 1996; Ross 1990), and that religious culture can provide transcendental motivation and a culture supportive of action (Barnes 2005; Hughes and Demo 1989; Smith 1996b; Wood 1999). Although the focus in this work is specifically on perceptions of agency, these studies address similar concepts.

Religious beliefs or teachings may also speak to the perceived external barriers inhibiting change. For example, to combat perceived structural impediments, religious groups may frame civic action as "God's work" or encourage the sentiment that because a group is acting justly, it cannot fail (Nepstad 1996; Nepstad 2004; Pagnucco 1996; Smith 1996a; Smith 1996c; Young 2002). Additionally, doctrines may make taking action a moral imperative regardless of the potential resistance from external forces.

Hypotheses

To review, the different denominational characteristics discussed throughout the preceding section are expected to influence individual beliefs and behaviors that are related to: 1) how often an individual is civically engaged; 2) the bridging capital he or she shares with the rest of their community; and 3) his or her exposure to empowering worldviews concerning community involvement. Through opening or closing these pathways, these characteristics of religious identity produce stronger or weaker feelings about the effectiveness of attempting change in one's community. Although these pathways are in some ways connected, they each highlight different means by which religious affiliation influences opinions regarding the efficacy of community action.

The previous literature discussed above suggests several specific hypotheses which are evaluated in the following analyses. To begin, I expect that members of religious groups that activate one or more of the three pathways listed above will have higher feelings of agency in their community when compared to non-religious respondents (Hypothesis 1). For those denominations that facilitate pathway 1, the relationship between religious affiliation and feelings of agency will be mediated by the individual's previous community engagement (Hypothesis 2). This relationship is expected to be present in Evangelical Protestant denominations, which currently exhibit high levels of civic engagement, and black Protestant denominations, wherein activism is

commonly a major component of religious life (Regnerus and Smith 1998; Steensland et al. 2000). The mainline Protestant focus on social justice (i.e., through volunteering) also suggests a positive relationship between mainline affiliation and higher levels of perceived agency.

In denominations that facilitate pathway 2, the relationship between religious affiliation and feelings of agency will be mediated by the individual's trust of others in their community (Hypothesis 3a). This mediating effect is expected to be present for Evangelical Protestants via their evangelism and community outreach. This might also include black Protestants and Jews for whom church and community are closely intertwined (Davidman 1990; Ellison and Sherkat 1995; Lazerwitz 1988). Alternatively, the embattlement of Evangelical Protestants discussed in Smith (1998) and the intra-group focus of black Protestants may decrease the bridging capital they build with fellow community members and subsequently their sense of community agency.

I do not expect the pathways of previous engagement and increased bridging capital to fully account for the statistical relationship between denominational affiliation and perceived community agency. The previous literature illustrates that religion can be a source of empowering doctrines and teachings regarding individual and collective agency, characteristics which are not tapped by the first two pathways. These characteristics of religious identity are particularly salient in the case of black Protestants. As previous work has shown, affiliation with black churches can increase feelings of self-mastery and empowerment for their members (Barnes 2005; Harris 1994; Hughes and Demo 1989). Members of black Protestant denominations are expected to exhibit a relationship between religious affiliation and perceptions of community agency that is not fully explainable via the previous two pathways (Hypothesis 4). The data do not allow a direct test of this mediation hypothesis, but there is evidence in the previous literature

that, for certain denominations, a portion of any remaining statistical effect is attributable to beliefs stemming from these empowering doctrines.

Data

The data for these analyses comes from the Social Capital Benchmark Survey (Saguaro Seminar at the John F. Kennedy School of Government 2000). The SCBS was undertaken to "measure various manifestations of social capital as well as its suspected correlates" (Ibid., pg 3). The largest-ever survey on civic engagement in America (Roper Center 2006), its methodology consisted of community level and national level components. For these analyses, the national level sample is used. The survey was fielded between June and November of 2000 using random digit dialing methods. Interviews were obtained from a total of 3,003 respondents with adjusted response and cooperation rates of 28.7 and 42.7 percent, respectively. Data for the statistical analyses are weighted using the included frequency weight (FWEIGHT) developed by the survey authors. Missing cases resulted in a valid, weighted sample size of 2,474. With the exception of missing data on income, none of the missing data suggests a systematic sampling error. Because the data are believed to be missing completely at random (MCAR), after dealing with the missing data for income as discussed below, the listwise deletion approach is as robust as or more robust than other options for dealing with missing data (Allison 2002).

Measures

Community agency

The dependent variable for the analyses is the respondent's sense of agency within their community. This attitude is measured by the question, "Overall, how much impact do you think that people like you can have in making your community a better

place to live?" with the response categories "No impact," "A small impact," "A moderate impact," or "A big impact." Because of its generality, this question encompasses both individual ability and expectations of external barriers or facilitators to community improvement.

Previous research finds that the more focused an attitudinal assessment is to a certain behavioral outcome, the better a predictor it is of that outcome (Bandura 1977; Fishbein and Ajzen 1974; Schuman 1995). In other words, an individual's perception of his or her ability to complete a marathon is more likely to predict whether they do so than a generalized sense of agency. Because the item used as the dependent variable in these analyses specifically addresses opinions about agency in one's community, it is well-suited for the purposes of this analysis.

Additionally, an attitude towards a potential behavior is most likely to be a predictor of that behavior when the attitude is strongly felt (Fazio and Zanna 1978). If strong positive or negative feelings are most likely to predict a certain behavior, the most pragmatic approach is to determine the predictors of those strong feelings. As such, for these analyses the outcome variable was recoded into dichotomous response categories representing strong feelings that a significant impact could be made (1 = "A moderate impact" or "A big impact" responses) or strong feelings that an impact could not be made (0 = "No Impact" or "A small impact" responses).

Religious affiliation

To determine denominational affiliation, respondents were asked, "What is your religious preference?" Responses to this category were recoded to mimic the RELTRAD coding scheme (Steensland et al. 2000) as closely as possible because of its emphasis on religious histories and its growing prevalence in the literature and subsequent comparability to other studies. The specific denominational classifications are included

in the appendix. The statistical analyses used an indicator variable to represent membership in each tradition. Comparing each religious denomination to the group of unaffiliated respondents makes interpretation of the religious effects most clear. Additionally, ancillary analysis showed that on average, non-affiliated individuals volunteer and work within their community less than any of the religious affiliation categories. As such, non-affiliated individuals are used as the reference group for the analyses. Frequencies for the eight resulting religious traditions (and the non-religious category) are presented in Table 2.1.

Previous engagement and trust

Two variables are expected to mediate the relationship between religious affiliation and feelings of agency within one's community. They are the individuals' previous community-focused involvement and their trust of other community members. Previous involvement is measured by one question within a battery of items that began "Which of the following things have you done in the past twelve months?" Five subparts of the question were presented to each respondent in random order. The measure of previous engagement used is the individual's indication that they have "worked on a community project" (1=Yes, 0=No) in the last 12 months.

Trust in other members of the respondent's community is measured by a three-variable scale. By design, this operationalization assumes that individuals realize a connection between community improvement and the efforts of not only a person's neighbors, but local law enforcement and businesses as well. Respondents were asked "Think about [group]. Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?" The groups "people in your neighborhood," "people who work in the stores where you shop," and "the police in your local community" were each included in separate questions. Responses to these questions were recoded so that

higher levels of trust were represented by higher scores and then summed to create the community trust scale included in the analyses. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation for the scale are .67 and .41, respectively.

Control variables

To address possible confounding factors, several control variables are included in the analyses. The concepts and their operationalizations are as follows: age in years, income (1 = less than $20,000; 2 = $20,000-$29,999 and less than $30,000 unspecified; 3 = $30,000-$49,999; 4 = $50,000-$74,999 and greater than $30,000 unspecified; 5 = $75,000-$99,999; 6 = greater than $100,000)[12], a female indicator variable, education level (1 = less than high school; 2 = high school diploma or GED; 3 = some college; 4 = associate's degree; 5 = bachelor's degree; 6 = some graduate training; 7 = graduate or professional degree), an Caucasian indicator variable, a logged 1997 population density score (higher values equal higher population density), years residence in local community (1 = less than 1 year; 2 = one to five years; 3 = six to ten years; 4 = eleven to twenty years; 5 = more than twenty years; 6 = all my life), an indicator variable reflecting the respondent's opinion of whether they will be residing in the same local community in the next 5 years (1 = Yes), political and social ideology (1 = very conservative to 5 = very liberal), and a sum of the number of other groups the respondent has participated in

[12] In the original income coding scheme, two "drill-down" categories were included in the survey design to improve item response rates. In these analyses, responses of "less than $30,000 unspecified" are included in the "$20,000-$29,000" category. Responses of "greater than 30,000 unspecified" are included in the "$50,000-$75,000" category. Because there is reason to believe that item non-responses on income are not MAR (see Turrell 2000), it is important to include these cases for the other variables. To decrease the number of cases deleted via listwise deletion, the modal values of "$50,000-$74,999" and "greater than $30,000 unspecified" were imputed for missing values. This imputation method is not ideal when attempting to obtain unbiased estimates for the imputed variable; however, as income is not a central focus of this analysis, a more aggressive imputation technique is not warranted.

during the past 12 months. Descriptive statistics for each of these variables are included in Table 2.1.

The dichotomous nature of the dependent variable required an analytical approach other than typical OLS regression. As such, the models are analyzed using binomial logistic regression. The tables present odds ratios, or a ratio representing the change in the likelihood of observing success (in this case, a strong feeling of agency) in the dependent variable per unit change of the relevant independent variable. In terms of the religious affiliation variables, a higher value indicates that members of that affiliation feel that they can have a stronger impact on their local community.

Table 2.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics		
Religious Affiliation Indicators	**N**	**%**
Black Protestant	169	6.85
Evangelical Protestant	368	14.87
Mainline Protestant	603	24.38
Catholic	646	26.13
Other Christian	300	12.14
Jewish	35	1.39
Other Religion	67	2.71
No religion	285	11.52
Total N	2474	

Variables	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**
Community agency	0	1	0.79	--
Age	18	92	43.99	16.84
Income	0	5	2.43	1.46
Female Indicator	0	1	0.52	--
Education	1	7	3.35	1.87
Caucasian Indicator	0	1	0.73	--
Log 1997 Pop. Density	-4.47	11.94	6.15	2.31
Length of residence	1	6	3.69	1.46
Plan to stay?	0	1	0.80	--
Political Ideology	1	5	2.68	1.15
Secular group involvement	0	15	2.78	2.45
Previous engagement	0	1	0.40	--
Community trust	3	12	9.54	2.03

Results

Table 2.2 displays the results of five logistic regression models addressing the hypotheses above.

Table 2.2 Logistic regression models Predicting Individual's Feelings of Community Agency

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Age	0.990 **	0.989 **	0.991 **	0.983 ***	0.985 ***
Income	1.011	1.020	1.013	1.005	0.998
Female	1.191	1.159	1.135	1.088	1.071
Education	1.094 **	1.094 **	1.087 *	1.054	1.048
Caucasian	1.227	1.398 **	1.360 *	1.134	1.113
Log 1997 Pop. Density	0.951 *	0.961	0.967	0.977	0.983
Length of residence	1.000	0.997	0.995	0.998	0.995
Plan to stay?	1.981 ***	1.998 ***	1.933 ***	1.809 ***	1.756 ***
Political ideology	0.989	1.015	1.010	1.012	1.005
Secular group involvement	1.162 ***	1.158 ***	1.107 ***	1.159 ***	1.110 ***
No Religious Affiliation (Reference)		--	--	--	--
Black protestant		2.084 **	1.952 *	1.986 *	1.872 *
Evangelical protestant		1.719 **	1.619 *	1.536 *	1.459
Mainline protestant		1.217	1.127	1.122	1.039
Catholic		1.345	1.263	1.171	1.107
Other Christian		1.849 **	1.730 *	1.602 *	1.517
Jewish		0.908	0.803	0.875	0.781
Other Affiliation		2.027	1.914	1.787	1.686
Previous engagement			1.697 ***	--	1.660 ***
Community trust				1.224 ***	1.220 ***
Constant	1.924 *	1.123	1.151	0.338 **	0.353 **
- 2LL	2437.2	2419.2	2401.3	2365.51	2349.66
Naglekerke R-squared	0.071	0.082	0.093	0.113	0.123

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Model 1 is a baseline model including only control variables. Throughout all models, three control variables are significant predictors of a sense of community agency. Increased age is related to decreased feelings of community agency, a finding which is not surprising given the previous literature on aging and feelings of control (see Mirowsky and Ross 2003). Individuals who expect to remain in their community are nearly twice as likely as others to indicate that they hold strong feelings of community agency. Participation in secular groups is positively related to feelings of community agency throughout all five models.

Model 2 adds indicator variables for each of the RELTRAD classifications. For this and the remaining models, the "no-religious affiliation" category is excluded from the analyses and is the reference group for the denominational indicators. As the table shows, the strongest statistically significant denominational effects are connected to individuals who are affiliated with black Protestant denominations. These respondents are more than twice as likely as individuals with no religious affiliation to have strong, efficacious feelings about their ability to enact change in their communities. This is followed by the "Other Christian" denominational grouping and Evangelical Protestants, who are 1.85 and 1.72 times more likely than the reference group to have indicated high feelings of community agency, respectively.

In model 3, an indicator variable denoting that the respondent participated in a community project within the past year is added to the models. Having been previously involved with a community project increases the likelihood of an individual having a strong sense of community agency by 69.7%. Although still significant at the $p<.05$ level, the parameter estimates of the black Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, and Other Christian indicators decrease as a result of this addition to the model. There is a

difference of 13, 10, and 12 percentage points respectively between model 2 and model 3 for these coefficients.

Model 4 is similar in structure to model 3 with the exception that the previous engagement variable is removed from the model and the variable measuring the individual's trust in other members of their community is included. As the table indicates, each unit increase in trust increases the likelihood of an individual having strong feelings of community agency by 22.4%. As in model 3, the parameter estimates of the black Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, and Other Christian indicators have decreased. There is a difference of 10, 18, and 25 percentage points respectively between model 2 and model 4 for these coefficients.

Model 5 includes both the previous engagement indicator variable and the community trust measure. It is difficult to discern exactly how much of an effect previous engagement might have had in building trust and therefore how interrelated these pathways might be. However, model 5 shows that the reduction in the coefficient for previous engagement is rather small (.04), and the fact that both variables remain statistically significant and exhibit no signs of multicolinearity indicates that these are two distinct pathways. The inclusion of these variables together completely statistically controls for the effects of the Evangelical and Other Christian affiliations. The statistical effect of identification with a black Protestant religious identity is decreased by .21, or about 10% of the total effect estimated in model 2, but it remains significant at the $p<.05$ level.

Discussion

The results of these analyses indicate that religious identity, as operationalized by denominational affiliation, has an effect on an individual's feelings of agency within their

community. Furthermore, that effect appears to be a function of multiple pathways of influence which are encouraged or suppressed by denominational characteristics.

Hypothesis 1 stated that incumbents of religious identities that demonstrated one of the denominational characteristics from Figure 2.1 would express higher levels of community agency. This hypothesis is supported for individuals affiliated with black Protestant, Evangelical Protestant and Other Christian religions. Although the previous literature and ancillary analyses suggest that Jewish and Mainline Protestant organizations hold some of the relevant denominational characteristics, Hypothesis 1 is not supported for these groups. This lack of support is discussed in more depth later in this section.

Hypothesis 2 posited that one source of increased community agency would be experiences with previous community-based engagement. It was expected that a respondent's affiliation with a religious identity that has historically promoted or is currently promoting civic engagement (such as Black and Evangelical denominations) would be related to increased feelings of agency, and that this relationship would be mediated by a measure of whether the individual had been involved in a community project within the past year. This hypothesis is supported by decreases in the estimated coefficients for black Protestants and Evangelical Protestants after controlling for the previous engagement variable. In raw numbers the decrease in the coefficient for black Protestants is slightly larger than that of Evangelical Protestants and Other Protestants, but in terms of the percentage change in the odds ratios, all of the changes in effect are approximately 5-6%. Given the long tradition of black Protestant engagement in America, the finding that previous engagement is a source of agency for their members is not surprising. For Evangelical Christians, currently high levels of engagement appear to have an influence on individuals' feelings of community agency.

Hypothesis 3a stated that religious groups who were most likely to come into positive contact with other members of their community would develop bridging social capital that would mediate the relationship between religious affiliation and perceptions of community agency. In the analyses, the respondent's trust of other members of their community statistically controls for portions of the three significant denominational effects. The decrease in coefficients is greatest for the Other Christian and Evangelical Protestant denominations, supporting Hypothesis 3b, which posited that intra-group preference may decrease the relevance of trust for some inwardly focused groups such as black Protestants. The strong role of trust in the Other Christian category suggests that because white Protestantism is so tightly intertwined with American culture, it may be more simple and natural for these groups to build social capital with extra-group members. The difference in odds ratios between models 2 and 4 for the black Protestant category is only 58% of the Evangelical difference between these models and 40% of the Other Christian difference. For black Protestants, bridging capital and trust of other members, shopkeepers, and law enforcement in the community appear to be less important in influencing feelings of community agency. Ancillary analyses show that black Protestants on average have the lowest levels of trust in other members of their communities of all the denominational categories. These results are congruent with Sampson et al.'s (1997) findings that groups with high levels of bonding capital are not strongly influenced by levels of trust within their community, and with research that demonstrates that a strong intra-group preference decreases inter-group interaction (Blau 1977; Blau, Beeker and Fitzpatrick 1984; Blum 1984; Blum 1985). One limitation of this analysis is that it does not address possible threshold effects related to the relative size of the religious group within the community. As groups grow they may become more or less receptive to inter-group interaction, thereby influencing their levels of social capital.

This issue is beyond the scope of these analyses, but would be well-suited for future study.

Statistically controlling for previous engagement and social capital wholly explains the influences of identification with an Evangelical or Other Christian religious identity on feelings of agency within one's community. However, a statistically significant black Protestant effect remains. When considered in light of the literature on African American churches and their effects on individual empowerment discussed above, this remaining statistical correlation supports Hypothesis 4 and provides evidence of a third means by which denominational affiliation affects feelings community agency. Specifically, it suggests that increased beliefs about one's personal agency can be derived from religious doctrine and teachings and be abstracted to the broader community.

There still remains the question of why affiliation with certain groups does not show an effect on perceptions of community agency. Mainline Protestants are an especially interesting case; they have the second highest frequency of previous involvement (behind Jews) and share the highest scores for trust of others in their community with Evangelicals. Yet affiliation with a mainline Protestant denomination is not a significant predictor of feelings of community agency. It is possible that this is an effect of lower levels of religious salience in the lives of mainline Protestants. Although mainline Protestants are civically engaged and are closely aligned with predominant American culture, the importance of religion in determining these behaviors is low. Considering that empowering doctrine and teachings are not a hallmark of mainline Protestant faiths, the lack of a relationship between mainline Protestants and strong feelings of community agency is less surprising.

The small number of Jewish respondents is a possible cause of the non-significant findings between Jewish affiliation and perceptions of community agency. Jews are most

likely of all the groups to have participated in some community project within the past year and score near the middle for levels of community trust. Future research using larger Jewish samples or qualitative studies may shed light on trust and agency in Jewish communities.

Catholics are squarely in the middle of the denominational groups in terms of community trust, but score better than only the reference group in terms of previous community involvement. Since Vatican II, the Catholic church has supported engagement in the name of causes such as Latin American politics and right to life issues (Nepstad 2004; Perl and McClintock 2001; Smith 1996c), but there has not been a strong focus on localized engagement in the U.S. Additionally, for some groups of Catholics, individual attitudes on historically important issues, such as abortion rights, are becoming more moderate, partially as a result of changing demographics and decreasing attendance (Hoffmann and Johnson 2005; Sullins 1999). This more moderate stance combined with the less local styles of Catholic involvement are possible reasons that the differences between Catholics and the non-religious reference group are not large enough to be statistically significant. Additionally, as will be discussed in chapter 3 there is reason to expect that attitudes and religious salience are curvilinearly (rather than linearly) related.

In summary, identification with three religious identities was found to be significantly related to feelings of community agency. Black Protestants showed the strongest relationship between denominational affiliation and perceived community agency when compared to the reference group. This strong relationship is likely explained by the conclusion that black Protestant affiliation affects beliefs regarding community agency through all three pathways. Specifically, black Protestants participate in activities *and* share worldviews that promote beliefs in community agency. Conversely, Evangelical Protestants and Other Christians showed no evidence of

influence through pathways other than the first two: previous engagement and the development of social capital.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have presented statistical evidence for two methods by which denominational affiliation has an effect on an individual's feelings of agency within their community: increased feelings of personal agency via previous engagement and increased trust in other community members via the formation of bridging social capital. The findings suggest that a third path of influence - increased beliefs in one's personal agency via church teachings and culture - also exists and mediates the relationship between affiliation with a black Protestant denomination and an individual's perceptions of community agency. However, this hypothesis cannot be fully tested using the given data. The relationship between religious variables and feelings of agency within the community was shown to be independent of other predictors which might confound this relationship, such as education level, race, stability within the community, other group involvement, and population density.

As the previous research has shown, focused assessments of attitudes can be valid predictors of potential behavior and as such, these findings suggest that religious affiliation is one of the exogenous factors that play a role in predicting activism in one's community. It is important to note that activism does not always mean contentious behavior, but can be connected to any number of contentious or non-contentious activities such as voting in local elections, city council involvement, neighborhood watch participation, PTA membership, or other similar activities. These facets of community life greatly shape most individuals' day-to-day experiences, whether they are participants or not. If their direction and form are primarily shaped by those who participate, the analyses above suggest that the presence or absence of certain religious groups and

organizations in a community may have considerable influence on community development. In other words, the previous analyses support the conclusion that the religious structure of a community can have a profound effect on individual lives regardless of one's own affiliation.

On a larger scale, several movements of the last century that had a global impact have been closely intertwined with religious institutions and identities (for example, the Indian Independence movement, the Iranian revolution, and the American Civil Rights movement). With a few exceptions, recent explanations for the successes of such movements have focused on the role that religion plays in mobilizing resources such as money, charismatic leaders, and training spaces. However, this paper adds to a growing section of the literature by providing evidence that religious affiliation can have attitudinal effects which translate into movement participation and success. Previous work has shown that feelings of agency are not only related to one's likelihood of participation, but also to one's likelihood of success. As such, the relationship between denominational affiliation and perceptions of agency is not a trivial one.

Chapter Three: The Identity Effect

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND ATTITUDES TOWARD ABORTION AND DOCTOR-ASSISTED DEATH

In this section I consider an important question regarding the foundations of religiously-based attitudes and the fluidity of religious identity. Namely, how do religious identities differ given different social contexts and different levels of salience?

The relationship between identity, cultural narratives, and the process of emplottment presented in Ammerman's, Somers', and Smith's works (e.g. Ammerman 2003; Smith 2003; Somers 1994) provide a starting point for evaluating this question. To review, cultural narratives provide both macro level social structure and micro level cognitive structures for interpreting reality. They connect individual perspectives to social structure through stories that have a shared meaning in a given society. Through the process of emplottment, individuals who identify with actors in cultural narratives view themselves and others through the filter of this narrative. This approach is deterministic in the sense that social structure provides a limited number and type of cultural narratives to choose from, but through the process of emplottment, social actors have a degree of freewill in determining how they perceive the world and are perceived by it. In chapter 1, I presented the example of the American Experiment narrative to make this concept more tangible. Later in this chapter I will present four additional narratives directly related to the analyses at hand.

The intersections between religion and ethnicity presented in Hammond's (1988) work (discussed in chapter 1) offer a means of refining this approach in light of the understanding that religious identity is not always chosen freely. The ascribed nature of ethnicity suggests that where religious narratives are closely intertwined with ethnicity,

religious identities are more likely to, at least initially, be ascribed as well. The epitome of this is Judaism, wherein the culture would not exist without its connection to religion (Hammond 1988) and Jewish identity is ascribed at birth through matrilineal descent. However, this high degree of intermingling between religious narratives and ethnicity is not required for us to observe the ascribed nature of religious identity. As Peek's work shows, such identities can exist devoid of specific religious laws addressing descent or formal induction into the faith. Rather, where religious identities are connected closely to important cultural narratives, a de facto ascription of religious identity may occur by nature of cultural norms and family of origin[13]. This identity may present itself in the form of a *means*-based display of religion that allows individuals to operate within the cultural norms of their immediate surroundings, or by shaping personal, often taken for granted, attitudes[14].

But what of religious narratives that do not have a unique connection with a specific cultural group? When a religion is not connected to a specific subsection of the population (as delineated by race, ethnicity, or other means) via cultural narratives, individuals within that group are not likely to inherit ascribed attributes of that religion. Correspondingly, when a specific group has no cultural ties to religion, individuals within that group are not likely to inherit ascribed religious beliefs. Without the conscription of religious identities via cultural norms and values, individuals are free to develop achieved religious identities. With this in mind, one preliminary response to the questions above appears to be that religious identities will develop differently in connection with and in the shadows of significant cultural and ethnic differences.

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[13] The concept of "civil religion" (see Bellah 1967) provides a somewhat related foundation for such an assumption.

[14] In this second case, the allusion to Berger's (1967) sacred canopy is intended.

Catholic versus Protestant religious identities

To confirm this, I consider two distinctly different religious contexts within the American religious landscape – Evangelical Protestants and Catholics.

Ethnic connections

Approximately 55% of Americans claim affiliation with some version of Protestantism, outpacing the nearest runner-up – Catholicism – by more than two to one (Sherkat and Ellison 1999). Clearly, Protestantism is an important component of the American religious experience. However, with a few exceptions, such as some black Protestant denominations (e.g. Ellison and Sherkat 1995), Protestantism is not uniquely connected to a specific ethnic group or subculture. Some theorists have argued that Protestant ideals form the basis for an American civil religion (e.g. Bellah 1967) or are intertwined more so than other denominations with American meta-narratives (e.g. Smith 2003). These works support the assertion that Protestantism, rather than being the exclusive cultural capital of one group, is a part of broader American culture. In contrast, almost since its introduction in the United States, Catholicism has been marked by connections with certain ethnicities (Finke and Stark 1993; Hammond 1988; Herberg 1960).

Institutional hierarchy

That Catholic authority and hierarchy shape the Catholic experience is implied in most studies of Catholicism. In contrast, although certain threads of Protestantism have at times closely aligned with larger governing bodies such as the National Council of Churches, on the whole, Protestantism is marked by variety and denominational individualism. As O'Conner and Berkman (1995) suggest, this difference in denominational structure is not trivial in terms of its effect on religious context. Indeed,

many of these differences were the source of conflict between Catholics and Protestants in the early half of the 20th century (Curry 1972; Wuthnow 1988). For the most part, Catholic-Protestant relations in the latter half of the century have been marked by greater cooperation and acceptance of each group; however, these differences remain.

Clearly, Protestantism and Catholicism represent distinct religious contexts. Protestantism is marked by decentralization and a lack of connection with ethnicity. In contrast, Catholicism is, in most cases, intimately connected to ethnicity and centrally organized. If different processes of religious identity formation exist, it should be apparent between these two religious groups.

For the following analyses I chose attitudes regarding two topics around which Catholics and Evangelical Protestants hold or have taken positions on in recent years: the legality of abortion and the legality of doctor-assisted death. Catholic and Evangelical Protestant objections to the legality of abortion are well-documented and are important pillars of each belief system (e.g. Dillon 1996; e.g. Emerson 1996; Greely 1992; Perl and McClintock 2001; Sullins 1999; Williams and Blackburn 1996). Attitudes regarding the issue of doctor-assisted death are less a part of each of these identities, but were recently brought to the forefront in the Terri Schiavo case (Blendon, Benson and Herrmann 2005). Each tradition has narratives that address these two issues.

> *Catholic anti-abortion narrative*: The Church is the final authority on what Catholics must believe. The official position of the Church as espoused by numerous important figures in the Catholic faith throughout history and more recently through the Evangelium Vitae papal encyclical is that abortion for any means is a sin. Nor is abortion in line with the "consistent life ethic" supported by high ranking American Catholics.
>
> *Catholic anti-euthanasia narrative*: The Church is the final authority on what Catholics must believe. Although taking one's own life or taking that of another is clearly forbidden by the Church, advances in modern medicine and recent debates regarding the legality of euthanasia have brought the issue of doctor assisted death to the fore front. According to many high ranking Church officials,

doctor assisted death or euthanasia is a not in line with the Catholic "consistent life ethic."

Evangelical Protestant anti-abortion narrative: God said "Thou shall not kill." Matters of life and death are for God to decide, not man. Scripture establishes that life begins at conception, therefore abortion is murder. Jesus commanded his disciples to go forth and make disciples of all nations, so it is important to carry this message to non-believers. In addition to being against God's law, the debate over abortion is a key battleground in the fight for America's moral well-being.

Evangelical Protestant anti-euthanasia narrative: God said "Thou shall not kill." Matters of life and death are for God to decide, not man. The technology to sustain life is a gift from God and it should be used whenever possible. Jesus commanded his disciples to go forth and make disciples of all nations, so it is important to carry this message to non-believers. Recent legal efforts to allow euthanasia or doctor assisted death represent the incursion of man's law into the territory of God's law.

Although variation exists in these narratives at both the individual and group levels, these represent the ideal types (in a Weberian sense) of Catholic and Evangelical Protestant narratives that speak to each of these issues. The similar aspects of each of these narratives are their "meta" components. They are the aspects of Catholicism or Protestantism that form the foundations for many components of lower level narratives.

Hypotheses

The most striking difference to be expected between the culturally embedded religious identities found in Catholicism and the less culturally embedded identities found in Protestantism may be the early adoption of religiously-based attitudes in the former group. I have presented Catholicism as an example of a religious tradition which fosters both ascribed and achieved religious identities (similar to the Muslim identities discussed in Peek 2005) and Evangelical Protestantism as the source of primarily ascribed variations of religious identity. The ascribed nature of religious attitudes through an early exposure to and emphasis on religious narratives suggests that religiously-based attitudes may resonate with Catholic adherents even at low levels of religiosity and spirituality.

During what Hammond, Peek, and Ammerman might refer to as the *ascribed* religious identity stage, these individuals are pressured by normative forces to exhibit high levels of attitudinal conformity at low levels of religious salience, rather than a linear relationship resulting from individuals taking on a religious identity as they became more religiously involved and invested.

The previous literature suggests that the transition from ascribed religious identity to achieved religious identity is similar to other types of conversion and marked by a period of introspection and religious questioning (Batson, Schoenrade and Ventis 1993; Neitz 1987; Peek 2005). Given this assumption, I expect that Catholic individuals' professed support of Catholic tenets will weaken as they make the transition from ascribed to achieved Catholic identities and consider questions and alternatives they may not have addressed before. But as individuals emerge from these internal debates or otherwise take on an achieved Catholic identity, their support for Catholic beliefs will increase again. In contrast, Protestants, who do not have a strong cultural foundation for their beliefs at their initial introduction to the faith, should exhibit a positive linear correlation between their religiosity/spirituality and the strength of religiously-based attitudes.

Data and methods

The data for this study are taken from the 2004 Survey of Texas Adults (SoTA, Musick 2004). The SoTA was fielded from November 5, 2003 to January 29, 2004. Participants were selected from the 18 and older Texas household population via random-digit dialing methods. Response rates were 37% and 89% at the household and respondent levels, respectively. The original sample size was 1,504 respondents. Missing cases for variables included in the analyses decreased the sample size; multiple imputation (Allison 2002) was used to predict and impute values for missing cases where

appropriate[15]. A weighting variable that matched the sample to statewide demographic characteristics was included in regression analyses. After selecting only the Catholic and Evangelical Protestant respondents and weighting the data, the total N for the analyses was 856.

The regional SoTA data was used for these analyses because no recently compiled, nationally representative data sets included the correct combination of dependent and independent variables required to conduct the desired analyses. Although the SoTA is a regional survey, a comparison with a nationally representative survey from the same time period (2004 General Social Survey, Davis, Smith and Marsden 2007) shows that distributions for the dependent variables by the relevant religious identity classifications are similar. In only one case, that of Catholic attitudes toward euthanasia, are the means between the SoTA variable and the variable from the nationally representative sample statistically different. An analysis of the nationally representative sample suggests that this difference is attributable to a stronger opposition to doctor-assisted death among Catholics in the south. The difference in strength is not relevant to the following analyses, but as no previous literature addressing this difference was found, it suggests a possible avenue for future research. Table 3.1 presents a comparison of the dependent variables across datasets.

[15] The PROC MIANALYZE procedure in SAS 9.1.3 was used to impute values.

Table 3.1 Comparison of dependent variables by religious identity and dataset

Evangelicals

Variable	SoTA			GSS		
	Mean	**Std. dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. dev**	**N**
Abortion	0.731	0.414	469	0.784	0.413	231
Euthanasia	0.428	0.461	469	0.44	0.497	232

Catholics

Variable	SoTA			GSS		
	Mean	**Std. dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. dev**	**N**
Abortion	0.691	0.516	387	0.681	0.467	204
Euthanasia[a]	0.502	0.555	387	0.325	0.47	206

[a] - statistically significant difference between SoTA and GSS groups

Dependent variables

The dependent variables were operationalized as follows: "People who have incurable diseases should be allowed by law to let their doctors end their lives by some painless means when they and their families want to do so" and "A pregnant woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason whatsoever if she chooses not to have the baby." For each question, respondents were provided with a 5-point ordinal response set using the labels "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." These variables were coded so that more conservative responses were indicated by higher numbers.

Religiosity and spirituality measures

Two measures of religious salience are used. The first addresses general levels of religiosity via the question, "On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all religious and 7 is very religious; how religious would you say you are?" A similar question measuring the respondents general level of spirituality asked, "On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all spiritual and 7 is very spiritual; how religious would you say you are?" Some

researchers have been skeptical about whether respondents perceive religiosity and spirituality as different concepts and if so, what differences they entail. However, empirical work addressing the subject suggests that respondents do perceive religiosity and spirituality differently, with individuals perceiving religiosity as the institutional, dogmatic aspects of religion and spirituality the individual and emotional aspects (Roof et al. 1994; Zinnbauer et al. 1997).

The hypotheses discussed above posit curvilinear relationships between religious salience measures and the outcome variables for Catholics. As such, interaction and quadratic terms were created as necessary and are included in the relevant analyses.

Religious control variables

Two measures of religious participation were included in the analyses to control for the alternative possibility that any differences in attitudes resulted from differences in religious participation. Additionally, a measure of social conservatism was included to control for the effect of non-religious effects of ideology. These concepts were operationalized by the following questions and response sets: "How often do you attend religious services? Would you say never, less than once a month, 1 to 3 times a month, once a week or several times a week?" (higher attendance is represented by higher values); "How often do you take part in the activities and organizations of a church or place of worship other than attending services? Would you say never, less than once a month, 1 to 3 times a month, once a week or several times a week?" (higher participation is represented by higher values); "Where would you place yourself on this scale when considering social issues such as gun control, abortion, and the environment? 1 – Extremely Liberal, 7 – Extremely Conservative."

Demographic control variables

Several demographic control variables were included in the analyses. They are operationalized as follows: age in years, total household income in dollars per year, female indicator variable (1 = female), nonwhite indicator variable (1 = nonwhite), education (1 = no schooling, 2 = high school diploma or GED, 3 = associate degree, 4 = bachelor's degree, 5 = postgraduate degree).

All independent variables included in the analyses were centered to minimize collinearity and simplify the relevant graphs. Table 3.2 presents descriptive statistics for variables included in the analysis prior to centering.

Table 3.2 Descriptive statistics

	Total Sample		**Catholic Sample**		**Protestant Sample**	
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Opposition to Euthanasia	2.79	1.18	3.04	1.28	2.89	1.10
Opposition to Abortion	3.41	1.25	3.48	1.32	3.69	1.11
Age	41.40	17.44	40.15	17.46	44.07	16.14
Income	46,467.02	45,814.87	38,081.62	42,654.82	50,675.26	43,930.32
Female indicator	0.51	--	0.49	--	0.55	--
Non-white indicator	0.51	--	0.80	--	0.30	--
Education	2.24	1.19	1.97	1.21	2.33	1.13
Religiosity	4.78	1.68	4.77	1.54	5.21	1.39
Spirituality	5.11	1.65	5.00	1.70	5.42	1.39
Religious attendance	3.07	1.36	3.08	1.20	3.63	1.27
Religious participation	2.20	1.37	1.88	1.35	2.62	1.32
Social conservatism	4.84	2.03	5.03	2.24	5.36	1.60
Original N	1504		387		469	

Methods

Respondents were classified into religious traditions according to the RELTRAD affiliation scheme presented in Steensland et al. (2000). After multiple imputation was conducted to supplement missing data, regressions including control variables, original religious variables, interaction terms, and quadratic terms were estimated separately for those respondents who indicated affiliation with a conservative Protestant denomination or Catholicism.

Results

Tables 3.3 – 3.6 present parameter estimates for the regression analyses. For simplicity I will discuss the models for each dependent variable separately.

Opposition to abortion

With the exception of Catholics' education level, no demographic variables are statistically significant predictors of attitudes toward abortion for either group. For both groups, religious attendance and social conservatism are positively correlated with opposition to abortion. The effect of these variables is strongest in the Evangelical Protestant case. Religious participation is also positively correlated with Evangelical Protestant opposition to abortion. These linear associations are the primary explanatory relationships in the Evangelical Protestant case; none of the tests for curvilinear relationships are statistically significant. In contrast, the religiosity and spirituality quadratic terms are statistically significant in the analysis of the Catholic sub-sample. More specifically, at low and high levels of religiosity and spirituality, Catholic opposition to abortion is higher than at moderate levels. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present graphs of predicted values based on the parameter estimates from models 7 and 8 of Table 3.4.

Figure 3.1 Catholic opposition to abortion by Religiosity[2]

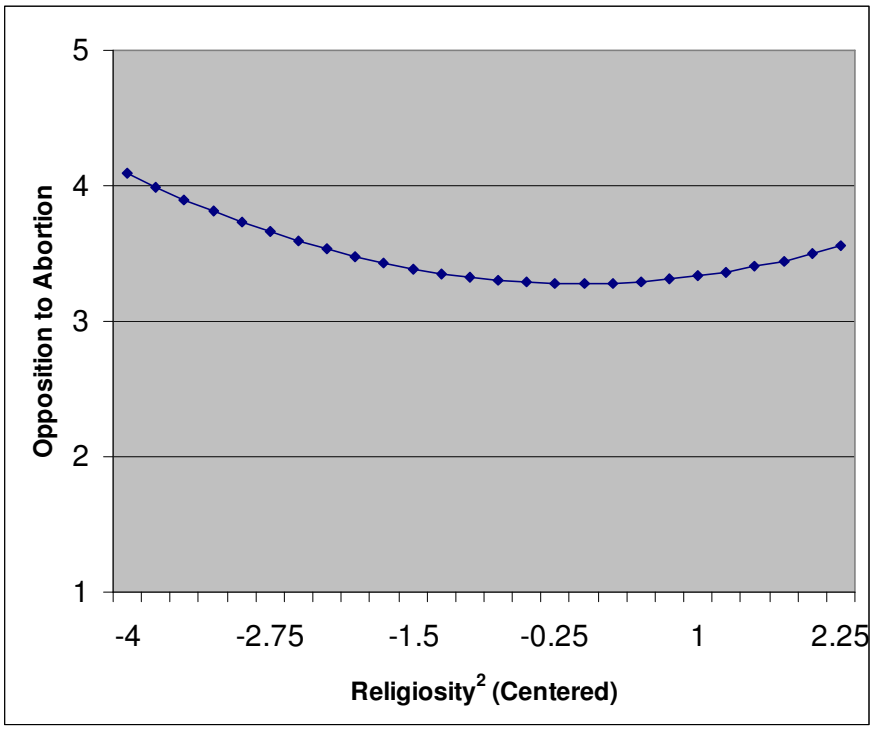

Figure 3.2 Catholic opposition to abortion by Spirituality[2]

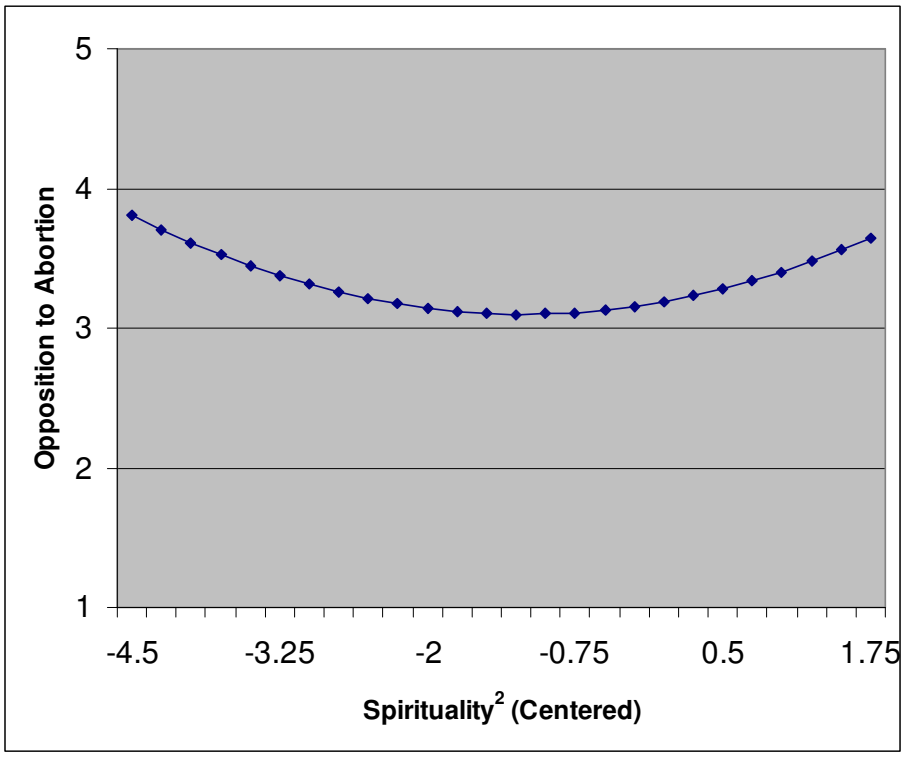

Table 3.3 OLS regression models predicting Evangelical Protestant opposition to abortion (N=469)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	Std. err.	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*
Intercept	3.454 ***	3.340 ***	3.373 ***	3.341 ***	3.376 ***	3.403 ***	3.310 ***	3.304 ***	3.303 ***
	0.129	*0.104*	*0.104*	*0.103*	*0.093*	*0.118*	*0.105*	*0.108*	*0.113*
Age	-0.001	-0.002	-0.004	-0.003	-0.002	-0.003	-0.003	-0.004	-0.002
	0.003	*0.003*	*0.003*	*0.003*	*0.004*	*0.003*	*0.003*	*0.004*	*0.003*
Income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.000	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*
Female indicator	0.096	0.170	0.126	0.164	0.146	0.152	0.132	0.154	0.152
	0.140	*0.117*	*0.116*	*0.115*	*0.109*	*0.113*	*0.105*	*0.111*	*0.106*
Non-white indicator	-0.206	-0.220	-0.167	-0.215	-0.224	-0.253	-0.128	-0.234	-0.251
	0.132	*0.129*	*0.132*	*0.128*	*0.131*	*0.139*	*0.125*	*0.141*	*0.129*
Education	-0.112	-0.087	-0.078	-0.083	-0.096	-0.079	-0.100 *	-0.069	-0.082
	0.059	*0.049*	*0.051*	*0.052*	*0.049*	*0.055*	*0.049*	*0.050*	*0.047*
Religiosity	0.033	0.024	0.041	0.033	0.035	0.030	0.078	0.033	0.020
	0.051	*0.043*	*0.050*	*0.047*	*0.052*	*0.045*	*0.047*	*0.048*	*0.047*
Spirituality	0.004	-0.015	0.012	-0.015	-0.014	-0.005	-0.028	0.031	-0.016
	0.050	*0.050*	*0.046*	*0.047*	*0.045*	*0.049*	*0.048*	*0.050*	*0.046*
Religious attendance	0.242 *	0.226 **	0.187 *	0.227 **	0.220 **	0.228 ***	0.183 ***	0.196 **	0.227 ***
	0.092	*0.065*	*0.071*	*0.068*	*0.071*	*0.059*	*0.051*	*0.060*	*0.053*
Religious participation	0.099 *	0.112 *	0.105 *	0.106 *	0.103 *	0.101 *	0.109 *	0.109 *	0.100 *
	0.048	*0.047*	*0.048*	*0.048*	*0.047*	*0.047*	*0.047*	*0.048*	*0.047*
Social conservatism		0.145 ***	0.145 ***	0.136 ***	0.136 ***	0.132 ***	0.136 ***	0.143 ***	0.143 ***
		0.036	*0.038*	*0.032*	*0.036*	*0.035*	*0.034*	*0.035*	*0.032*
Religiosity * Social conservatism			0.001						
			0.024						
Spirituality * Social conservatism				0.013					
				0.024					
Attendance * Social conservatism					-0.003				
					0.024				
Social conservatism squared						-0.010			
						0.018			
Religiosity squared							0.022		
							0.021		
Spirituality squared								0.025	
								0.020	
Attendance squared									0.035
									0.033
Average Adjusted R-square	0.131	0.183	0.165	0.179	0.171	0.176	0.162	0.174	0.176

Table 3.4 OLS regression models predicting Catholic opposition to abortion (N=387)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	Std. err.	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*
Intercept	3.362 ***	3.331 ***	3.324 ***	3.327 ***	3.356 ***	3.224 ***	3.280 ***	3.190 ***	3.284 ***
	0.150	*0.152*	*0.152*	*0.151*	*0.148*	*0.164*	*0.152*	*0.152*	*0.166*
Age	-0.003	-0.004	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.005	-0.004	-0.004
	0.004	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*
Income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.000	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*
Female indicator	0.012	0.069	0.053	0.051	0.033	0.038	0.010	0.073	0.025
	0.126	*0.130*	*0.125*	*0.124*	*0.127*	*0.127*	*0.123*	*0.133*	*0.124*
Non-white indicator	0.008	-0.002	0.030	0.040	0.023	0.056	-0.042	0.043	0.024
	0.174	*0.173*	*0.175*	*0.175*	*0.172*	*0.172*	*0.179*	*0.177*	*0.181*
Education	-0.173 **	-0.133 *	-0.149 *	-0.149 *	-0.147 *	-0.121	-0.147 *	-0.130	-0.155 *
	0.064	*0.066*	*0.069*	*0.067*	*0.065*	*0.066*	*0.065*	*0.066*	*0.064*
Religiosity	0.023	-0.028	-0.022	-0.032	-0.029	-0.026	0.005	-0.062	-0.011
	0.054	*0.056*	*0.062*	*0.059*	*0.056*	*0.057*	*0.057*	*0.068*	*0.055*
Spirituality	0.057	0.059	0.060	0.062	0.072	0.058	0.059	0.150 *	0.061
	0.048	*0.049*	*0.048*	*0.050*	*0.051*	*0.051*	*0.047*	*0.062*	*0.050*
Religious attendance	0.171 **	0.190 **	0.182 **	0.189 **	0.183 **	0.175 **	0.180 **	0.199 **	0.202 **
	0.064	*0.062*	*0.066*	*0.065*	*0.064*	*0.064*	*0.063*	*0.069*	*0.073*
Religious participation	0.090	0.090	0.087	0.093	0.090	0.091	0.080	0.073	0.089
	0.058	*0.057*	*0.057*	*0.058*	*0.056*	*0.057*	*0.057*	*0.057*	*0.058*
Social conservatism		0.086 *	0.083 **	0.080 **	0.074 *	0.102 **	0.087 *	0.088 **	0.065 *
		0.034	*0.030*	*0.030*	*0.032*	*0.035*	*0.034*	*0.033*	*0.032*
Religiosity * Social conservatism			0.002						
			0.023						
Spirituality * Social conservatism				-0.013					
				0.020					
Attendance * Social conservatism					-0.033				
					0.028				
Social conservatism squared						0.027			
						0.018			
Religiosity squared							0.052 *		
							0.024		
Spirituality squared								0.063 **	
								0.023	
Attendance squared									0.040
									0.052
Average Adjusted R-square	0.056	0.072	0.069	0.070	0.066	0.068	0.072	0.090	0.062

Table 3.5 OLS regression models predicting Evangelical Protestant opposition to doctor-assisted death (N=469)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	Std. err.	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*
Intercept	2.672 ***	2.639 ***	2.627 ***	2.600 ***	2.592 ***	2.502 ***	2.583 ***	2.585 ***	2.536 ***
	0.094	*0.104*	*0.103*	*0.093*	*0.105*	*0.113*	*0.112*	*0.112*	*0.118*
Age	0.004	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.005	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.002
	0.004	*0.004*	*0.003*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.003*	*0.004*	*0.003*	*0.004*
Income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.000	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*
Female indicator	0.088	0.096	0.082	0.126	0.128	0.104	0.119	0.122	0.097
	0.110	*0.125*	*0.117*	*0.110*	*0.122*	*0.121*	*0.114*	*0.109*	*0.125*
Non-white indicator	0.278 *	0.345 *	0.410 **	0.348 **	0.371 *	0.353 *	0.338 **	0.367 *	0.319 *
	0.138	*0.139*	*0.140*	*0.133*	*0.146*	*0.157*	*0.130*	*0.156*	*0.147*
Education	0.058	0.070	0.069	0.076	0.072	0.067	0.064	0.067	0.081
	0.057	*0.055*	*0.054*	*0.052*	*0.052*	*0.053*	*0.050*	*0.053*	*0.052*
Religiosity	-0.035	-0.011	-0.044	-0.032	-0.040	-0.026	-0.029	-0.021	-0.019
	0.049	*0.048*	*0.049*	*0.048*	*0.050*	*0.048*	*0.054*	*0.046*	*0.046*
Spirituality	0.031	0.043	0.027	0.029	0.014	0.024	0.015	0.030	0.057
	0.048	*0.053*	*0.047*	*0.055*	*0.057*	*0.052*	*0.053*	*0.052*	*0.047*
Religious attendance	0.179 **	0.098	0.113 *	0.146 *	0.137 *	0.121	0.142 *	0.122 *	0.102
	0.058	*0.068*	*0.057*	*0.059*	*0.061*	*0.068*	*0.065*	*0.061*	*0.066*
Religious participation	0.036	0.049	0.058	0.043	0.052	0.052	0.048	0.057	0.039
	0.049	*0.050*	*0.048*	*0.051*	*0.051*	*0.050*	*0.050*	*0.048*	*0.049*
Social conservatism		0.119 ***	0.101 **	0.143 ***	0.110 **	0.143 ***	0.117 ***	0.118 ***	0.123 ***
		0.035	*0.038*	*0.037*	*0.036*	*0.037*	*0.032*	*0.033*	*0.032*
Religiosity * Social conservatism			0.025						
			0.023						
Spirituality * Social conservatism				-0.035					
				0.028					
Attendance * Social conservatism					0.031				
					0.029				
Social conservatism squared						0.033			
						0.019			
Religiosity squared							0.005		
							0.022		
Spirituality squared								0.010	
								0.025	
Attendance squared									0.049
									0.038
Average Adjusted R-square	0.066	0.083	0.088	0.103	0.102	0.101	0.090	0.092	0.086

Table 3.6 OLS regression models predicting Catholic opposition to doctor-assisted death (N=387)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	Std. err.	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*	*Std. err.*
Intercept	2.747 ***	2.723 ***	2.714 ***	2.716 ***	2.730 ***	2.665 ***	2.678 ***	2.659 ***	2.626 ***
	0.142	*0.137*	*0.137*	*0.137*	*0.136*	*0.157*	*0.146*	*0.142*	*0.154*
Age	-0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.001	-0.001	0.000
	0.004	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*	*0.004*
Income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000 *	0.000 *	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.000	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*
Female indicator	-0.019	0.028	0.023	0.026	0.048	0.048	0.062	0.049	0.007
	0.122	*0.118*	*0.118*	*0.119*	*0.117*	*0.118*	*0.120*	*0.121*	*0.117*
Non-white indicator	0.158	0.151	0.163	0.155	0.138	0.157	0.160	0.173	0.176
	0.169	*0.161*	*0.166*	*0.166*	*0.162*	*0.161*	*0.164*	*0.160*	*0.174*
Education	-0.211 **	-0.189 **	-0.183 **	-0.183 **	-0.187 **	-0.173 **	-0.180 **	-0.181 **	-0.187 **
	0.063	*0.060*	*0.062*	*0.062*	*0.058*	*0.061*	*0.058*	*0.061*	*0.060*
Religiosity	0.113 *	0.068	0.094	0.083	0.064	0.066	0.056	0.059	0.098
	0.053	*0.053*	*0.061*	*0.053*	*0.056*	*0.055*	*0.055*	*0.060*	*0.057*
Spirituality	-0.093	-0.068	-0.089	-0.082	-0.077	-0.084	-0.095 *	-0.041	-0.100 *
	0.048	*0.044*	*0.051*	*0.047*	*0.048*	*0.048*	*0.046*	*0.056*	*0.046*
Religious attendance	0.094	0.090	0.079	0.077	0.084	0.079	0.111	0.105	0.142 *
	0.061	*0.061*	*0.059*	*0.058*	*0.059*	*0.059*	*0.061*	*0.060*	*0.072*
Religious participation	0.189 ***	0.180 ***	0.184 ***	0.180 ***	0.184 ***	0.184 ***	0.188 ***	0.175 **	0.178 **
	0.054	*0.053*	*0.053*	*0.053*	*0.053*	*0.053*	*0.053*	*0.054*	*0.054*
Social conservatism		0.066	0.073 *	0.076 *	0.069 *	0.084 *	0.071	0.072 *	0.065 *
		0.033	*0.035*	*0.034*	*0.033*	*0.035*	*0.037*	*0.029*	*0.031*
Religiosity * Social conservatism			0.008						
			0.023						
Spirituality * Social conservatism				0.014					
				0.018					
Attendance * Social conservatism					-0.019				
					0.031				
Social conservatism squared						0.013			
						0.019			
Religiosity squared							0.016		
							0.026		
Spirituality squared								0.028	
								0.020	
Attendance squared									0.070
									0.047
Average Adjusted R-square	0.116	0.122	0.130	0.130	0.127	0.127	0.124	0.124	0.131

Opposition to doctor assisted death

Tables 3.5 and 3.6 show that education and race are important in predicting Catholic and Evangelical Protestant attitudes, respectively, towards doctor-assisted death. For Evangelical Protestants the measure of social conservatism is also consistently significant throughout the analyses, with higher levels of conservatism predicting a greater likelihood of opposition to doctor-assisted death. In the Catholic analyses, the measure of religious participation is the only linear religious variable that is consistently statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level. In this set of analyses there are no curvilinear terms that are significant at the $p<.05$ level.

Discussion

In comparing tables 3.3 and 3.4 we find evidence of different religious development paths between Evangelical Protestants and Catholics. Whereas there is a linear relationship between religious salience and beliefs about abortion for Evangelical Protestants, for Catholics the relationship is a curvilinear one.

The first key to understanding this difference lays in conceptualizing religious identity as fluid and contextual. As Peek's work shows, transitioning between these intra-denominational identities is a very real and significant event for the individuals involved.

This is most clear in the Catholic case and explains why Catholics at lower levels of spirituality and religiosity have beliefs that are more closely aligned with official church teachings than Catholics at moderate levels of religiosity and spirituality. For historically Catholic groups, there is a strong cultural component to Catholicism (Hammond 1988). This may exist independently of strong feelings of faith but still influence the socialization process. This acculturation may result in ascribed religious identities that produce attitudes that are in line with cultural norms, but not necessarily based in religious devotion (Hermansen 2003; Peek 2005). As the work on religious seeking and religious pluralism suggests, when and if religious issues begin to be explored in more depth, questions may arise, and these ascribed attitudes may be questioned and weakened (e.g. Batson, Schoenrade and Ventis 1993; Berger 1967; Peterson 1986). However, once the conversion from ascribed to achieved religious identity is complete, attitudes may again fall in line with broader denominational beliefs. After this stage of introspection, adherents may emerge with beliefs that have been emboldened by the resolution of inner conflicts.

In contrast to the Catholic experience, most Evangelical Protestant denominations in the U.S. do not have strong ascribed cultural components. For Evangelicals Protestants the conversion is more connected with the development of new religious ideas rather than a reframing of cultural beliefs. The lack of significant curvilinear effects in table 3.6 and the differences between northern and southern Catholics regarding this issue suggests that the Catholic narrative on doctor assisted death is not currently pervasive enough nor embedded enough in core Catholic tenets to be an ascribed component of Catholicism.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The relationship between religious identity and attitudes is a complex one. In addition to highlighting the fluid, contextual nature of this relationship, this chapter has shown that it is incorrect to assume that different religious identities have the same social-psychological foundations. Where one religious identity may derive attitudes strongly from cultural ties, another may derive them from religious conviction. The resulting attitudes may be very similar or very different.

Although the focus for these analyses has been on the individual, these findings suggest that macro level factors such as race, ethnicity, and religious context play an important role in the connection between religious identity and engagement. In this chapter, I focused on how these religious identities affect individuals' behaviors and attitude development in ways that encourage engagement. In the following chapter I focus more intently on the macro level aspects of religious identity. Whereas chapter 2 strived to define some of the characteristics of religious identity that result in engagement, the following chapter analyzes denominational level statistics to verify that these individual level findings are supported at the group level.

Chapter Four: Considering Observed Behaviors

Up to this point the analyses in this work have focused on the relationship between religious identity and attitudes at the individual level. However, one of the primary assumptions underlying this work is that religious identities carry with them a litany of prescribed attitudes and actions via religious narratives that operate at both macro and micro levels.

The individual level analyses in chapter 2 and 3 provide insight into which religious groups can be expected to exhibit the highest levels of activism. In concentrating on the individual, it is possible to learn more about the role of individual preferences in individual action, and as in the preceding section shows, this is an important aspect of predicting involvement and motivation. But it cannot merely be assumed that those individual preferences are related to aggregate level behaviors. Instead, this should be verified through observation. In this chapter, I attempt to verify the conclusions from chapters 2 and 3 at the aggregate level by focusing on congregational level activism rates. As such, the majority of this chapter will focus on the presentation of descriptive statistics related to actual reported rates of congregational activism.

To some extent this chapter has roots in the classic works of Walzer (1966) and Thompson (1966), and in contemporary works such as Gorski (2003), in that it analyzes group level rates of activism and attributes variations to differences in religious culture. In *Revolution of the Saints*, Walzer (1966) posits that European "saints" laid the cultural foundation for activism through their morally guided worldviews and their relative lack of respect for any authority other than God's. The religious beliefs of Puritans accentuated and legitimated the pursuit of moral justice and thereby conflicted with the

normative social order of the day. Through their efforts Puritans sowed the seeds for social critique and activism, not only within their group but in others who they affected through proselytizing and cognitive liberation. What was most significant for future social involvement was that the Puritans developed a prescription for social activism via narratives of religious identity that long outlived their specific causes.

Thompson's (1966) study of the English working class dovetails nicely with Walzer's work. In Thompson's view, English Methodism made each individual his own slave driver. The foreman was no longer needed to break the backs of the workers and tell them they were not laboring hard enough; their religious convictions were there to do it for them. A culture of asceticism produced a more motivated worker than pay or punishment ever could, but the Methodism that supported the strong work ethic which boss-men relished in their workers eventually produced equally motivated labor activists.

More recent work shows how these group and individual motivations can evolve to address new issues. Specifically, Young (2002) illustrates how early American activists combined schemas of national sin and individual responsibility to produce the first sustained, national protests. In a similar vein, novel interpretations and combinations of religious narratives that gain traction in society can produce new and unique movements (Ammerman 2003; Nepstad 2004; Smith 2003; Somers 1994). In short, the actions of religious groups can have social effects that last well beyond the specific issues they addressed.

Hypotheses

The initial analyses in chapter 2 showed that two groups – black Protestants and Evangelical Protestants – encouraged beliefs and behaviors that were supportive of community action. Community-based action is only one area of potential engagement, but these analyses suggest that on the whole these groups may be more active than other

religious bodies. Although the literature suggested that Catholics and Jews might also exhibit high levels of engagement, this was not shown; however this lack of significant findings may be due to the local nature of the outcome variable, model design (in the Catholic case), or weak statistical power (in the Jewish case). This chapter evaluates these assumptions.

Data and methods

In these analyses I use data from the 1998 National Congregations Study (NCS: Chaves 1998). The NCS was conducted in conjunction with the 1998 General Social Survey and is the first random sampling of American congregations. Randomly selected individuals who responded that they attended religious services at least once a year on the General Social Survey were asked to provide information on the congregation which they attended. A representative from this congregation was then contacted and administered the NCS. The survey asks congregational level questions on a variety of topics such as congregational demographics, functions, and activities. In all, 1,436 GSS respondents reported their places of worship and 1,236 distinct congregations were surveyed.

For the purposes of this section, I am concerned with questions from the survey that cover whether the congregation has participated in or discussed various forms of activism in the past year. Because this chapter is focused on providing a broad picture of denominational activism, the quantitative analyses are basic means comparisons of these various measures of engagement by denomination. To circumvent the issue of weak statistical power when including small groups (such as Jews), I concentrate less on statistically significant differences between the denomination and more on common trends in the levels of activism. This allows for a more complete consideration of all religious identities, at the risk of overemphasizing the meaning of statistical anomalies.

The adjusted means presented in the following tables are based on Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) models that include a control variable for the number of regular attendees in the congregation. This measure is operationalized by the question "How many adults – people 18 years or older – would you say regularly participate in the religious life of your congregation?" All analyses are weighted using the included WEIGHT2 variable. This weighting variable compensates for the fact that larger congregations were more likely to be selected for the analyses. Table 4.1 presents the distribution of congregational affiliations in the NCS data. These classifications are based on the RELTRAD classification system that has been used throughout this work[16]. I include the results of means comparisons to indicate which differences between groups are statistically significant[17]. The lack of cohesion in the "Other faith" and "No Religion" categories makes them uninterpretable; they are presented for completeness but are not discussed at length.

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[16] These classifications are derived from the individual's reported affiliation rather than that reported by the congregation leader. Because the NCS did not collect race information, it is not possible to construct a comparable RELTRAD measure from the NCS data. It is debatable whether this approach results in the misclassification of congregations. Smith (1998) argues that individuals are more knowledgeable about their religious traditions than researchers may expect. Any differences in classification are assumed to be negligible. In this case, the "No Religion" category represents the group of respondents who attend religious services more than once a year but do not identify with a religious tradition. Congregations in this category may be of any denomination.

[17] The indicators of significantly differentce are as follows:
a - significantly different from Black Protestants
b - significantly different from Catholics
c - significantly different from Evangelical Protestants
d - significantly different from Jews
e - significantly different from Mainline Protestants
f - significantly different from No Religion category
g - significantly different from Other Faith category
All differences are measured at the $p<.05$ level

Table 4.1 RELTRAD distribution[18]

Denomination	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Evangelical	543	42.29	543	42.29
Mainline	295	23.02	838	65.31
Black Protestant	171	13.29	1009	78.60
Catholic	122	9.48	1130	88.08
Jewish	15	1.16	1145	89.23
Other faith	100	7.83	1246	97.06
No Religion	38	2.94	1283	100.00

Political Involvement and Activism

I begin by looking at questions which assess the congregations' general involvement in politics[19,20]. Attitudes toward political involvement have been implicit components of the religious identities and narratives discussed in previous chapters. In the case of Evangelical Protestants, political involvement can be a means of evangelizing or protecting the moral fabric of society (e.g. Regnerus and Smith 1998; Young 2002). For black Protestants, religion has a strong connection with political involvement and is a means of addressing the incongruence between the social world and religiously based ideals of justice (Ellison and Sherkat 1995; McAdam 1982; Steensland et al. 2000; Wood 1999).

Tables 4.2 through 4.6 address different types of political involvement measured by the NCS. These findings are presented as percentages of congregations by tradition that gave their congregants the opportunity to engage in some form of political activity, such as petition campaigns, political discussion groups, and voter registration drives.

[18] The difference between the distribution of religious affiliations presented in chapter 2 and those presented here suggest an interesting relationship between the willingness of congregational leaders and congregational members to participate in phone surveys.

[19] Because the ANOVA information reported by SAS does not include an adjusted sample size, tables present unweighted totals. Adjusted means are based on weighted analyses.

[20] As this chapter focuses on broad trends, I present only a bare bones analysis of the results in each section. A more detailed and holistic analysis is presented at the conclusion of the chapter.

The specific activities were measured in the following ways: Table 4.2 presents responses to the question, "Within the past 12 months have people at worship services been told of opportunities for political activity, including petition campaigns, lobbying, or demonstrating?" For the measures presented in tables 4.3 to 4.5 congregation leaders were asked, "Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following events: To discuss politics? (Table 4.3) An effort to get people registered to vote? (Table 4.4) To lobby elected officials? (Table 4.5)" Table 4.6 displays the percentage of affirmative responses to the question, "Have voter guides ever been distributed to people through your congregation?" Table 4.7 presents the percentage of congregational leaders responding that within the last 12 months, groups within the congregation have met for social justice, neighborhood, or community issues. Table 4.8 displays results of the question, "Within the past 12 months, have there have been groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following purposes or activities: To organize or participate in a demonstration or march in support of or opposition to some public issue or policy?"

Table 4.2 Percent of congregations communicating opportunities for political activity.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	47% [c,d,g]
Evangelical Protestant	32% [a,d]
Mainline Protestant	37% [d]
Catholic	40% [d]
Jewish	89% [a,b,c,e,f,g]
Other faith	27% [a,d]
No Religion	25% [d]

N=1393, F=9.16***

Table 4.3 Percent of congregations discussing politics.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	19% [c,d,e]
Evangelical Protestant	7% [a,d,g]
Mainline Protestant	12% [a,d]
Catholic	11% [d]
Jewish	66% [a,b,c,e,f,g]
Other faith	17% [c,d]
No Religion	12% [d]

N=1398, F=21.01***

Table 4.4 Percent of congregations encouraging voter registration.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	37% [b,c,e,f,g]
Evangelical Protestant	7% [a,b]
Mainline Protestant	6% [a,b]
Catholic	16% [a,c,e]
Jewish	23%
Other faith	10% [a]
No Religion	7% [a]

N=1395, F=34.99***

Table 4.5 Percent of congregations organizing to lobby elected officials.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	12%
Evangelical Protestant	10%
Mainline Protestant	12%
Catholic	14%
Jewish	25%
Other faith	15%
No Religion	8%

N=1396, F=4.12***

Table 4.6 Percent of congregations that have distributed voter guides.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	31% [g]
Evangelical Protestant	30% [g]
Mainline Protestant	24%
Catholic	23%
Jewish	14%
Other faith	13% [a,c,f]
No Religion	34% [g]

N=1394, F=4.66***

Table 4.7 Percent of congregations meeting for social justice, neighborhood, or community issues.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	6% [d]
Evangelical Protestant	3% [d]
Mainline Protestant	3% [d]
Catholic	5% [d]
Jewish	21% [a,b,c,e,f,g]
Other faith	2% [d]
No Religion	4% [d]

N=1392, F=7.39***

Table 4.8 Percent of congregations who have met to organize or participate in a demonstration or march.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	24%
Evangelical Protestant	18% [b]
Mainline Protestant	18%
Catholic	26% [c]
Jewish	27%
Other faith	19%
No Religion	14%

N=1394, F=5.31***

When these tables are taken together, of the four primary groups of focus (black Protestants, Evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, and Catholics), black

Protestants clearly lead the pack in terms of political involvement and activism. Black Protestant congregations lead these four other groups in 5 out of the 7 measures. They are more likely to communicate opportunities for activism, support political discussions, register individuals to vote, distribute voter guides, and meet regarding social and community issues than Evangelicals, mainline Protestants, and Catholics. They are surpassed only by Catholics in their likelihood of having lobbied elected officials[21]. Catholic congregations report slightly higher attention to demonstrations and marches than black Protestants, but it is not clear from the question wording to what extent the congregations were involved with these issues. Although Evangelical Protestants do not show as much overall involvement as might have been expected based on the results in chapter 2, table 4.6 shows that they are almost as likely as black Protestant denominations to have distributed voter guides.

Community Service/Volunteering

Chapter 2 concluded that certain groups were more likely to have strong feelings of community agency. Although Chapter 2 was not able to empirically verify that these attitudes would relate to increased community involvement, previous work on the relationship between attitudes and behaviors (i.e. Ajzen 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein 1977; Schuman 1995; Schuman and Johnson 1976) suggested that this would be the case. With the exception of Evangelical Protestants, the results from chapter 2 have seen good support through the verification of high rates of black Protestant engagement at the congregation level in the political involvement and activism measures above. However a more direct test of the conclusions of chapter 2 is to consider more similar dependent variables, in this case those with a more local focus.

[21] This result is in line with O'Conner and Berkman's (1995) finding that Catholics are more likely than Protestants to utilize lobbying to achieve political goals.

Tables 4.9 – 4.11 presents the percentage of congregations by tradition in which there have been groups or meetings or classes or events within the past 12 months to: plan or conduct an assessment of community needs (table 4.9); visit others such as shut-ins, incarcerated individuals, or the sick (table 4.10); and organize or encourage people to do volunteer work (4.11).

Table 4.9 Percent of congregations planning or conducting an assessment of community needs.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	63% [c,e,g]
Evangelical Protestant	35% [a,b,e]
Mainline Protestant	45% [a,c]
Catholic	59% [c]
Jewish	64%
Other faith	44% [a]
No Religion	51%

N=1394, F=12.80***

Table 4.10 Percent of congregations meeting to visit others.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	3% [f]
Evangelical Protestant	3% [f]
Mainline Protestant	3% [f]
Catholic	1% [f]
Jewish	0% [f]
Other faith	0% [f]
No Religion	24% [a,b,c,d,e,g]

N=1392, F=11.29***

Table 4.11 Percent of congregations that have encouraged people to do volunteer work.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	60% [c]
Evangelical Protestant	42% [a,b,d,f,g]
Mainline Protestant	49% [b,d,f]
Catholic	75% [c,e,g]
Jewish	94% [c,e,g]
Other faith	57% [b,c,d]
No Religion	79% [c,e]

N=1396, F=19.67***

Table 4.9 confirms some of the expectations derived from the findings in chapter 2, although Evangelical Protestant congregations continue to report the lowest rates of the four major Christian groups. Black Protestant congregations are the most focused on community needs and Catholics have the highest percentage of congregations encouraging volunteer work. This result is in line with Wilson and Janoski's (1995) finding that Catholics exhibit higher levels of volunteering than Protestants.

The high level of Catholic interest in community involvement shown in table 4.9 is somewhat in contrast to the findings of the second chapter wherein Catholic individuals were not more or less likely than unaffiliated individuals to have strong feelings of community agency. However, as chapter 3 illustrated, the range of attitudes represented within the Catholic ecclesia at different levels of religious salience complicate the search for a quantitative understanding of the relationship between Catholic attitudes and behaviors.

Social Issues

The belief in social justice and a concern for issues of race are hallmarks of black Protestant religious traditions (Steensland et al. 2000). This aspect of black Protestant religion, in addition to the findings in chapter 2, suggests that black Protestant congregations will be strongly concerned with topics related to race. Liberal stances on

environmental and social issues are often attributed to mainline Protestant denominations and the independent forms of Protestantism to which religious seekers have been turning in greater numbers (Roof et al. 1994). Tables 4.12 and 4.13 assess congregational activities related to these issues. Table 4.12 presents the percentage of congregations within the tradition in which there have been groups or meetings or classes or events to discuss pollution or other environmental issues within the past twelve months. Table 4.13 reports the percentage of congregations by tradition in which there have been groups or meetings or classes or events to discuss race relations in our society within the past twelve months.

Table 4.12 Percent of congregations discussing pollution or other environmental issues.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	12%
Evangelical Protestant	8% [e,g]
Mainline Protestant	15% [c]
Catholic	15%
Jewish	7%
Other faith	19% [c]
No Religion	5%

N=1397, F=5.54***

Table 4.13 Percent of congregations meeting to discuss race relations.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	47% [b,c,e,f,g]
Evangelical Protestant	20% [a,g]
Mainline Protestant	19% [a,g]
Catholic	16% [a,g]
Jewish	37%
Other faith	32% [a,b,c,e]
No Religion	22% [a]

N=1394, F=16.38***

Table 4.12 shows that mainline Protestant and Catholic congregations discuss environmental issues most often. The mainline Protestant result is not surprising given that this category contains the most liberal Protestant denominations of the four major Christian groups. Conversly, the high Catholic interest in these issues is surprising, given that Catholicism is more often noted for its concern with social issues (Jenkins 2002; Kurtz 1995; Nepstad 1996; Nepstad 2004; Smith 1991). Considering the role of black Protestant denominations during the civil rights movement, it is not surprising that black Protestants congregations reported discussing race relations most often of all the groups and that they did so at more than twice the rate of any of the other major Christian groupings.

Organizational Resource Commitment

For a considerable period of time in the latter half of the 20th century, research on social movements focused on the tangible resources that organizations were able to mobilize, such as funds and staff (see Benford 1993; Nepstad 2004; see Osa 1996; Snow and Benford 1988; Snow et al. 1986; Warner 1993). These factors were viewed as key components of movement success or failure. Although current trends in social movement research are less focused on this issue, organizational resource commitment still remains useful as a measure of those aspects which are important to congregations.

Table 4.14 presents the average amount of money spent per congregation on social service, community development, or neighborhood organizing projects of any sort within the past twelve months. Table 4.15 displays the percent of congregations in which at least one paid staff member has spent more than 25% of their work time on social service, community development, or neighborhood organizing projects of any sort within the past twelve months.

Table 4.14 Money spent on social service, community development, or neighborhood organizing projects[22].

Denomination	Avg. Dollars
Black Protestant	$ 46,466.28
Evangelical Protestant	$ 46,020.52
Mainline Protestant	$ 44,155.01
Catholic	$ 29,731.55
Jewish	$ 35,434.93
Other faith	$ 42,250.57
No Religion	$ 41,750.22

N=1186, F=0.05

Table 4.15 Percent of congregations having one paid staff member that has spent more than 25% of their work time on a social project.

Denomination	Percent
Black Protestant	12% [b]
Evangelical Protestant	8% [b]
Mainline Protestant	11% [b]
Catholic	21% [a,c,e,g]
Jewish	8%
Other faith	6% [b]
No Religion	9%

N=1329, F=7.40***

In terms of funds devoted to community projects, black Protestant denominations devote more money than any other group. This is congruent with the findings of chapter 2 that showed identification with a black Protestant religious identity resulted in high levels of community agency and suggested that black Protestant denominations would exhibit pro-community behaviors. In terms of time devoted to this cause by paid staff members, Catholic congregations lead the group, followed by black and mainline Protestants. Whereas Catholics congregations do not contribute large sums of money to

[22] Apparently, as with individual income, congregational finances are prone to refusals and inaccuracies in reporting. The high numbers of "Refused" and "Don't know" responses resulted in approximately 200 more missing cases than for other measures.

social causes, their higher tendency to have paid staff allows them to focus professional man-hours to their projects.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have focused on matching the individual level findings regarding attitudes in earlier chapters to congregational level behaviors. One of the primary assumptions of this work is that individuals first internalize religious identities via social narratives then project them back into the world. In doing so, they reinforce and shape the narratives that are available for internalization. While the first chapters in this work focused on this internalization of narratives by the individual, this chapter begins to address the reciprocal nature of this relationship. Namely, this chapter focuses on what happens when like-minded individuals come together and act.

This chapter confirms some of the suppositions from earlier sections of this work while highlighting aspects of the relationship between religious identity and behavior that were not evident previously. For example, chapter 3 showed that individual acceptance of Catholic principles cannot be assumed to exhibit a linear relationship with individual feelings of religiosity and spirituality. However, this chapter has illustrated that despite this variability in attitudes, Catholics groups still participate in social action as often as many of the other groups. Chapter 2 showed that black Protestants receive many different forms of encouragement for engagement via their denominations. The effect of these characteristics was evident in these analyses as well. Black Protestant congregations have a strong interest in political involvement, community issues, and race relations. For many of the measures, black Protestant congregations are the most likely congregations to have participated in "engagement behaviors."

There are two findings of note that arise from the analyses in this section. The first is the lack of engagement exhibited by Evangelical Protestant congregations. The

analyses in chapter 2 found that Evangelical Protestants were significantly more likely than unaffiliated respondents to have strong feelings of community agency. With the exception of the amount of monetary resources committed to the community, evangelicals are at or near the bottom in each of the behavioral measures of engagement. This may be a result of many factors. A lag between individual attitudes and congregational services offered may have not yet equalized, or the sense of embattlement that Smith (1998) highlights may be preventing Evangelicals from engaging. Chapter 2 suggested that evangelical practices created bridging capital between Evangelicals and their communities, and protestant cultural underpinnings created trust between Evangelicals and their cohabitants, but this chapter indicates that these factors may not manifest in congregational activity. The somewhat unexpectedly high levels of engagement behaviors present in Catholic congregations and the unexpectedly low levels in Evangelical congregations may be explainable by the differing roles of organizational structure in these groups. Whereas the Church has historically been the central source of services and community for Catholics (as noted in Hammond 1988), Protestants, as in the days of the wandering itinerate minister, are relatively independent of their congregations as a source of central organization. Unfortunately, this issue is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it does pose interesting questions for future research.

A second, somewhat surprising, finding is the high level of Jewish involvement. Although previous qualitative literature suggests that Jews are strongly engaged, the small number of Jewish respondents in national level samples often results in insignificant statistical findings in quantitative analyses. The results presented here should be viewed skeptically, as the small number of Jewish congregations represented makes this sub-sample exceptionally vulnerable to bias. However, if accurate, these

results paint a picture of synagogues as exceptionally active religious bodies. Future studies on activism and engagement should explore synagogue behavior in more depth.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This work began with four primary goals: 1) to explore the multilevel nature of religious identity within society; 2) to evaluate the effects of religious identity on social engagement; 3) to show the usefulness of quantitative methodologies to social movement research; and 4) to add to the body of research in the field of religion and social movements.

I began these tasks in chapter 1 by developing a concept of religious identity that was less deterministic and more mutable than previous approaches. This was done by using the concept of the social narrative as the basic building block of social structure and highlighting the role of emplottment in allowing individuals to shape their own religious identity. For this conceptualization to be useful in quantitative analyses, it needed to be operationalizable. The RELTRAD denominational scheme provided a culturally sensitive, standardized approach to measuring religious identity and was chosen as the basis for my religious classifications. Chapter 1 also presented research on the current state of religious identity research and the field of religion and social movements that informed the rest of the work.

Chapter 2 focused on providing evidence for the foundational connections between religious identity and attitudes regarding engagement. In exploring the religious narratives of different denominational classifications, it was possible to illustrate the ways that prescribed behavior such as previous community engagement and empowering doctrine produced attitudes that were supportive of community agency. The findings results of the analyses in chapter 2 showed that black Protestants denominations exhibit many characteristics that encourage engagement. As a result, members of black Protestant congregations were more likely than other groups to have strong feelings of

community agency. These individual level findings foreshadowed similar congregational level findings in chapter 4. A central component of the argument in chapter 2 relied on the assumption that attitudes influence behaviors; as such, considerable time was spent addressing the current state of the literature on this topic.

Chapter 3 expanded on the theory and analyses presented in chapters 1 and 2 by highlighting the fluidity of religious identity and the contextual nature of the relationship between religious identity and attitudes. Specifically, chapter 3 found that, for certain groups and certain core beliefs, the relationship between religious salience and the attitude strength was curvilinear. The attitudes in question were related to social engagement, as such, this chapter supports the conclusion that the relationship between religious identity and social engagement is a complex one.

To confirm the multilevel nature of religious identity, Chapter 4 attempted to empirically verify conclusions from the individual level analyses in the previous chapters at the aggregate level. Specifically, the analyses in chapter 2 suggested that black and Evangelical Protestant individuals would be the most socially engaged religious identities. The theory presented in chapters 1 and 2 suggested that Jews and Catholics might also show high levels of engagement in certain areas. Overall, the 15 measures of social engagement analyzed in chapter 4 support the individual level conclusions at the congregation level with the exception of lower than expected Evangelical involvement.

WEAKNESSES

Great effort has been expended to minimize the weaknesses present in this work; however, the breadth and complexity of such a project almost assures that some shortcomings will remain. I have presented some of the notable but minor weaknesses as they have arisen in previous sections. Where appropriate, I have suggested alternatives for conceptionalization, operationalization, and research design that could alleviate these

weaknesses in future work. Nevertheless, there are four major weaknesses that cannot be adequately resolved herein. I discuss them below in hopes that future research will be able to address these issues.

The first centers on the concept of identity promoted in this work. Identity has been an important subject of study since the early stages of sociology and psychology. Every decade sees new changes and approaches to the way that we, as researchers, perceive identity. In this work I present and make use of a concept of identity that is currently gaining attention in the religious identity literature. Because the foundations of this approach originate from a specific, rather than general, notion of identity, previous research has yet to address questions related to broader aspects of identity. The inability to respond to such questions is evidence of a lack of conceptual development in regards to a key component of this work. On a broader scale, answering such questions is important to the wider adoption of this approach.

Second, one of the main arguments for the narrative approach to identity centered on its ability to integrate individual and small group agency into social action. However, two of the three sets of quantitative analyses in this work focused on individual level attitudes and said little about individual or group agency. Chapter 4 addressed this reciprocity to some extent, but at best it shows that individual and aggregate conceptions of religious identity are congruent. Other than providing evidence that congregational behaviors represent the aggregate of individual behaviors, it does not speak to the individual influences on those higher level religious identities. The main reason for this deficiency is a lack of appropriate quantitative data. Cross-sectional data is useful for determining correlation, but generally inadequate for appropriately making causal arguments. It is typical in quantitative research wherein longitudinal data is not available to base causal directionality on theory and support hypotheses by correlational analyses

of cross-sectional data. This is the approach taken in this work. Although it is impossible to prove, with the available data, that the congruence between individual attitudes and group level actions is the result of a reflexive relationship, the theory presented in chapters 1 through 3 supports this conclusion.

Third, this work suffers from an affliction that plagues the American study of religion - an overemphasis on Protestant religions. Though Protestantism is a core component of the American religious experience, it does not completely define religion in America. Unfortunately, available data and the complexity of analyzing large numbers of small groups often force this approach. Despite the deficiencies therein, because Protestantism is a large component of the American religious experience, such analyses are likely reasonable, broad stroke approximations of American religiosity. The production of this broad stroke information is both a goal and a weakness of the nomothetic, quantitative approach used in this work.

Finally, neither does this work, in any empirical capacity, consider the effects of group level identities on broader culture or the topic of religious syncretism. Both of these issues are important aspects of the process through which changes at lower levels of society become institutionalized in the culture-at-large. In terms of religious development, this is likely to be an extremely fertile area for the narrative-based conceptualization of identity.

GOING FORWARD

Future research should seek to address the weaknesses outlined above. In general, this means further developing the narrative approach to identity and striving for research designs that can provide more empirical evidence of individual and small group agency in shaping social structure.

Beyond this, two areas of research suggested by this work hold the potential to bear considerable fruit. The first is in the area of religious development. The narrative approach provides a promising means of understanding what happens when political, social, and religious ideologies meet and intermingle. For example, liberation theology arose out of a merger of religious ideology and political ideology (Kurtz 1995; Nepstad 1996; Nepstad 2004; Smith 1991). A similar occurrence in the early 20th century in Jamaica resulted in the Rastafarian movement (Barrett 1997; Chevannes 1994). Both of these events resulted in unique combinations of religious and political ideology. Although numerous pages of research have been devoted to each of these movements, to my knowledge no work presents analytical concepts that can address the common processes in the development of these ideologies. The concept of the cultural narrative provides researchers with compact "chunks" of social structure that are useful as the building blocks of ideologies. As Young (2002) has shown, once these building blocks are delineated, one can fruitfully consider what happens when they come into contact with each other.

Second, chapter 3 presented an important finding regarding the relationship between ethnicity and religion. Building on earlier work, it showed that within the category of "Catholic" there could easily be many analytically relevant sub-classifications of Catholics. This is possible in any religion that is closely intertwined with ethnicity. As current research usually does not further subdivide these groups, studies may be missing important levels of detail. At a minimum, this work suggests that studies which include a Catholic measure also consider interaction effects with some measure of religious salience.

Lastly, future research should return to Smith's work in *Disruptive Religion* and revisit the weaknesses he saw in the field at that time. Relatively little has changed since

then, especially in regards to quantitative analyses of religion and social engagement. This work has attempted to clarify some of the current debates in the field, but in addition it has created additional questions to be answered. As current events focus more attention on the relationship between religion and political action, the importance of understanding this relationship will continue to grow.

Appendix A

RELTRAD CLASSIFICATIONS

Not all denominational affiliations addressed in the RELTRAD classification are present in all data sets.

Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey Denominational Classifications

Black Protestants

African Methodist Episcopal
Baptist (not Southern) (a)
Methodist (United, EUB) (a)
Southern Baptist (a)

Evangelical Protestants

Assemblies of God - Pentecostal
Born again Christian
Charismatic
Christian Churches
Churches of Christ
Community Church
Free Methodist
Full Gospel
Fundamentalist Adventist
Independent Fundamentalist Churches of America
Lutheran - Missouri Synod
Mennonite, Amish, Quaker, Brethren
Nazarene
Non-denominational (c)
Pentecostal; Church of God
Reformed - Christian or Dutch
Seventh Day Adventist
Southern Baptist (b)
Wesleyan

Mainline Protestants

Baptist (not Southern) (b)
Congregation - Christian
Disciples of Christ
Episcopal; Anglican
Lutheran - Evangelical
Methodist (United; EUB) (b)
Presbyterian
Reformed (all others)
UCC United Church of Christ

Catholic

Catholic

Other Christians

Christian (NEC; just Christian)
Ecumenical/Eclectic/Judeo - Christian
Jehovah's Witnesses
Mormons; Latter Day Saints
Orthodox - Eastern; Greek Rite Catholic
Other non-traditional Protestant
Scientists - Christian
Spiritualists

Unitarian; Universalist
Unity; Unity Church; Christ Church Unity

Don't know or refused to give specific denomination

Jewish

Jewish

Other Religions

All other religions

No Religions

No religious preference

(a) – includes only respondents whose race was reported as African American
(b) – excludes respondents whose race was reported as African American
(c) – includes only those who reported attending services at least once or twice a month

Survey of Texas Adults Denominational Classifications

Catholic

Catholic
Polish National Church

Evangelical Protestant

7th Day Adventist
Amish
Apostolic Christian
Apostolic Church
Assembly of God
Baptist - American Baptist Assoc.[b]
Baptist, Don't Know Which[b]
Bible Missionary
Brethren Church, Brethren
Brethren, Plymouth
Brother of Christ
Calvary Bible
Chapel of Faith
Charismatic
Chinese Gospel Church
Christ Cathedral of Truth
Christ Church Unity
Christ in Christian Union
Christ in God
Christian & Missionary Alliance
Christian Calvary Chapel
Christian Reform
Christian; Central Christian
Church of Christ, Evangelical
Church of Daniel's Band
Church of Prophecy
Church of the First Born
Church of the Living God
Churches of God (Except with Christ and Holiness)
Community Church
Covenant
Dutch Reform
Evangelical Congregational
Evangelical Covenant
Evangelical Methodist
Evangelical United Brethren
Evangelical, Evangelist
Evangelist Free Church
Faith Christian
Faith Gospel Tabernacle
First Christian
Four Square Gospel
Free Methodist
Free Will Baptist
Full Gospel
Grace Brethren
Holiness (Nazarene)
Holiness Church of God
Holy Roller
Independent
Independent Bible, Bible, Bible Fellowship
Independent Fundamental Church of America
Interdenominational Church[c]
Laotian Christian
Living Word
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
Lutheran, Don't Know Which
Macedonia
Mennonite
Mennonite Brethren
Mission Covenant
Missionary Baptist[b]
Missionary Church
Nazarene
New Testament Christian
No Denomination Given[c]
Non-Denominational Church[c]
Open Bible
Other Baptist Churches[b]
Other Fundamentalist
Other Lutheran Churches
Other Presbyterian Churches
Pentecostal

Pentecostal Assembly of God
Pentecostal Church of God
Pentecostal Holiness, Holiness Pentecostal
People's Church
Pilgrim Holiness
Presbyterian, Presbyterian Church In The USA[b]
Primitive Baptist[b]
Salvation Army
Southern Baptist Convention[b]
Swedish Mission
Swedish Mission
The Church of God of Prophecy
The Way Ministry
Triumph Church of God
Wesleyan
Wesleyan Methodist - Pilgrim
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

General Social Survey Denominational Classifications[23]

The following list includes all denominations within the classification scheme described above. Catholic[a] (RELIG = 2) and Jewish (RELIG = 3) traditions are not listed because there are no further subspecifications available in the General Social Survey for these affiliations. In addition to the denominations listed, "Other Affiliation" includes faith traditions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Eastern Orthodoxy (RELIG = 5-10, 12). Numbers in parentheses refer to the numeric value label for that denomination under the variable listed (DENOM or OTHER).

Black Protestant

Using Variable "DENOM"

African Methodist Episcopal Church (20)
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (21)
American Baptist Association[b] (10)
American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.[b] (11)
Baptist, Don't Know Which[b] (18)
Methodist, Don't Know Which[b] (28)
National Baptist Convention of America (12)
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. (13)
Other Baptist Churches[b] (15)
Other Methodist Churches[b] (23)
Southern Baptist Convention[b] (14)

Using Variable "OTHER"

African Methodist (15)
Apostolic Faith (14)
Christian Tabernacle (128)
Church of God in Christ (37)
Church of God in Christ Holiness (38)
Church of God, Saint & Christ (7)
Disciples of God (88)
Federated Church (98)
Holiness; Church of Holiness (56)
House of Prayer (104)
Missionary Baptist[b] (93)
Pentecostal Apostolic (103)
Primitive Baptist (133)
Sanctified, Sanctification (78)
United Holiness (79)
Witness Holiness (21)
Zion Union (85)
Zion Union Apostolic (86)
Zion Union Apostolic-Reformed (87)

Evangelical Protestant

Using Variable "DENOM"

American Baptist Association[c] (10)
Baptist, Don't Know Which[c] (18)
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (32)
Other Baptist Churches[c] (15)
Other Lutheran Churches (34)
Other Methodist Churches[c] (23)

[23] Reprinted from Steensland et al. 2000.

Other Presbyterian Churches (42)
Southern Baptist Convention[c] (14)
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (33)

Using Variable "OTHER"

Advent Christian (10)
Amish (111)
Apostolic Christian (107)
Apostolic Church (138)
Assembly of God (12)
Bible Missionary (109)
Brethren Church, Brethren (20)
Brethren, Plymouth (22)
Brother of Christ (132)
Calvary Bible (110)
Chapel of Faith (122)
Charismatic (102)
Chinese Gospel Church (135)
Christ Cathedral of Truth (108)
Christ Church Unity (29)
Christian and Missionary Alliance (9)
Christian Calvary Chapel (125)
Christian Catholic (28)
Christian; Central Christian (31)
Christian Reformed (32)
Christ in Christian Union (26)
Christ in God (101)
Churches of God (Except wit Christ and Holiness) (36)
Church of Christ (35)
Church of Christ, Evangelical (34)
Church of Daniel's Band (127)
Church of God of Prophecy, The (121)
Church of Prophecy (5)
Church of the First Born (116)
Church of the Living God (39)
Community Church (41)
Covenant (42)
Dutch Reformed (43)
Evangelical Congregational (2)
Evangelical Covenant (91)
Evangelical, Evangelist (45)
Evangelical Free Church (47)
Evangelical Methodist (112)
Evangelical United Brethren (120)
Faith Christian (139)
Faith Gospel Tabernacle (124)
First Christian (51)
Four Square Gospel (53)
Free Methodist (13)
Free Will Baptist (16)
Full Gospel (52)
Grace Brethren (100)
Holiness Church of God (90)
Holiness (Nazarene) (18)
Holy Roller (55)
Independent (24)
Independent Bible, Bible, Bible Fellowship (3)
Independent Fundamental Church of America (134)
Laotian Christian (146)
Living Word (129)
Macedonia (131)
Mennonite (63)
Mennonite Brethren (115)
Missionary Baptist[c] (93)
Missionary Church (117)
Mission Covenant (92)
Nazarene (65)
New Testament Christian (6)
No Denomination Given or Nondenominational[d]
Open Bible (27)
Other Fundamentalist (97)
Pentecostal (68)
Pentecostal Assembly of God (66)
Pentecostal Church of God (67)
Pentecostal Holiness, Holiness Pentecostal (69)
People's Church (140)
Pilgrim Holiness (57)
Primitive Baptist (133)
Salvation Army (76)
Seventh Day Adventist (77)
Swedish Mission (94)
Triumph Church of God (106)
Way Ministry, The (118)
Wesleyan (83)
Wesleyan Methodist-Pilgrim (84)

Mainline Protestant

Using Variable "DENOM"

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.[c] (11)
American Lutheran Church (30)
Episcopal Church (50)
Evangelical Lutheran (35)
Lutheran Church in America (31)
Lutheran, Don't Know Which (38)
Methodist, Don't Know Which[c] (28)
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (40)
Presbyterian, Don't Know Which (48)
Presbyterian, Merged (43)
United Methodist Church (22)
United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (41)

Using Variable "OTHER"

American Reformed (99)
Baptist (Northern) (19)
Christian Disciples (25)
Congregationalist, First Congregationalist (40)
Disciples of Christ (44)
Evangelical Reformed (46)
First Christian Disciples of Christ (49)
First Church (48)
First Reformed (50)
Friends (54)
Grace Reformed (89)
Hungarian Reformed (1)
Latvian Lutheran (105)
Moravian (8)
Quaker (70)
Reformed (71)
Reformed Church of Christ (73)
Reformed United Church of Christ (72)
Schwenkfelder (148)
United Brethren, United Brethren in Christ (23)
United Church of Canada (119)
United Church of Christ (81)
United Church of Christianity (96)

Other Affiliation

Using Variable "OTHER"

CONSERVATIVE NONTRADITIONAL

Christadelphians (30)
Christian Scientist (33)
Church of Jesus Christ of the Restoration (145)
Church Universal and Triumphant (114)
Jehovah's Witnesses (58)
Jesus LDS (62)
LDS (59)
LDS-Mormon (60)
LDS-Reorganized (61)
Mormon (64)
True Light Church of Christ (130)
Worldwide Church of God (113)

LIBERAL NONTRADITIONAL

Christ Church Unity (29)
Eden Evangelist (17)
Mind Science (75)
New Age Spirituality (136)
New Birth Christian (141)
Religious Science (74)
Spiritualist (11)
Unitarian, Universalist (80)
United Church, Unity Church (82)
Unity (95)

[a] Also included within the Catholic tradition are those who belong to the Polish National Church (OTHER = 123).

[b] Included only if race of respondent is black

[c] Included only if race of respondent is not black

[d] Includes only those who responded "no denomination given or nondenominational" (DENOM = 70). From this pool, those who attend church less than "about once a month" (ATTEND < 4) or those who responded "don't know or no answer" (ATTEND = 9) are excluded. This also includes additional respondents who responded with "Christian" or "interdenominational/no denomination" on the 1998 RELIG variable (RELIG = 11 or 13).

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Vita

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